PLUS 16-TRACK ALBUM: TIGERMOTH RECORDS SAMPLER

PROG

RUSH

"We were never the same band again"
How Rush redefined themselves with Moving Pictures

+

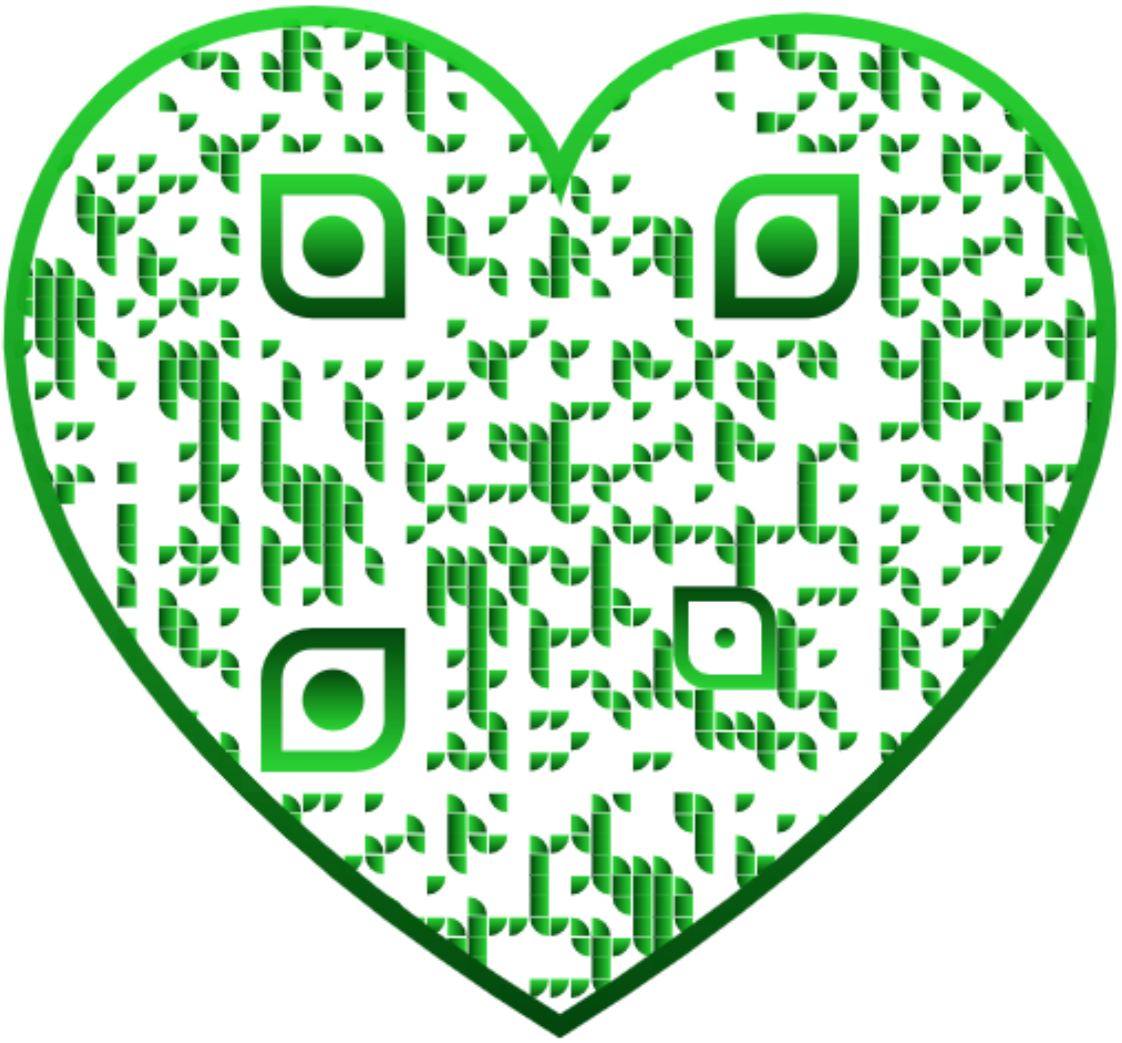
ENVY OF NONE
TIGER MOTH TALES
VDGG
MICHAEL ROTHER
PATTERN-SEEKING ANIMALS
JENNY HVAL
ROGER ENO

RENAISSANCE
The making of *Scheherazade And Other Stories*

GARY BROOKER
A tribute to the late Procol Harum singer and pianist

DAVE SINCLAIR
Caravan man on Canterbury, going solo and more

FUTURE
PROG 129



MARILLION

SEPTEMBER 2022

SUN 18	**BLACKBURN**	KING GEORGE'S HALL
MON 19	**GLASGOW**	ROYAL CONCERT HALL
WED 21	**YORK**	BARBICAN
THU 22	**SOUTHAMPTON**	O_2 GUILDHALL
SAT 24	**AYLESBURY**	FRIARS WATERSIDE
SUN 25	**STOKE**	VICTORIA HALL
TUE 27	**SHEFFIELD**	CITY HALL
WED 28	**BRIGHTON**	DOME
FRI 30	**LONDON**	EVENTIM APOLLO HAMMERSMITH

MYTICKET.CO.UK | MARILLION.COM

A KILIMANJARO & KNOWMOREPROMOTIONS PRESENTATION

KILIMANJARO

NEW ALBUM
"AN HOUR BEFORE IT'S DARK"
OUT NOW VIA EAR MUSIC

ISSUE 129 22.04.22

Contents

IF IT'S IN THERE IT'S ON HERE

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

COVER FEATURE

"Tom Sawyer was the hardest song to capture in the studio."

Rush p32

How Rush redefined themselves in the 80s with *Moving Pictures*.

Contents

REGULARS

PROG PRESENTS... pg 7
Download new material from Tigermoth Records with this issue's free digital sampler.

BLOODY WELL WRITE pg 10
Missives, musings and tweets from Planet Prog.

THE INTRO pg 12
Bill Bruford releases a career-spanning box set, plus the very latest news from Keith Emerson, Roxy Music, Opeth, James LaBrie, Tim Bowness, The Tangent, Jo Quail, Haken's Charlie Griffiths and more!

Q&A pg 26
Ambient musician and composer Roger Eno discusses his brand new music for the celebrated Deutsche Grammophon label.

THE PROG INTERVIEW pg 84
Dave Sinclair was a founding member of Canterbury mainstays Caravan and has also worked with Camel, Robert Wyatt and Matching Mole as well as having a solo career in his own right. Here he looks back over 50 years of making music.

THE MUSICAL BOX pg 90
Rush's monumental new *Moving Pictures* box set takes top billing this month, and there are also reviews of releases from Porcupine Tree, Fish, Pure Reason Revolution, Opeth, Radiohead, Jade Warrior, Mike Rutherford, Coheed And Cambria, Meshuggah, Kaprekar's Constant, The Pineapple Thief and more…

TAKE A BOW pg 108
We have live reviews of recent shows by Van der Graaf Generator, Tangerine Dream (with guest Steve Rothery), The Pineapple Thief and Nordic Giants.

MY PROG pg 114
Norwegian guitarist Anders Buaas discusses a prog world full of Yes, Tull, *Liege And Lief* and Scottish single malts.

FEATURES

Gary Brooker Pg 28
The prog world pays tribute to the late Procol Harum singer and pianist.

Renaissance Pg 46
The story of the band's 1975 epic, *Scheherazade And Other Stories*.

Craft Pg 50
Ex-members of The Enid discuss their sole album as Craft, now reissued.

Envy Of None Pg 54
Alex Lifeson, Andy Curran and Maiah Wynne discuss their debut album.

Kaprekar's Constant Pg 58
The UK folk proggers scale new heights with record number three.

Tiger Moth Tales Pg 62
Mainman Peter Jones proves to be a man for all seasons, plus the latest from the Camel camp.

Michael Romeo Pg 66
The Symphony X guitarist delivers part two of his *War Of The Worlds* concept.

Jenny Hval Pg 70
The Norwegian art-rocker returns with *Classic Objects*.

Pattern-Seeking Animals Pg 74
US proggers forge their own identity with third release *Only Passing Through*.

Michael Rother & Vittoria Maccabruni Pg 78
Former Neu! man and his partner-muse create new music in *As Long As The Light*.

The Emerald Dawn Pg 82
We discover the Cornish-based proggers making inroads into the UK scene.

KILIMANJARO PRESENTS

PRIMUS
a tribute to kings

performing
Rush's classic
"a farewell to kings"
in its entirety

SEPTEMBER 2022

tue 27 glasgow O_2 academy
thu 29 london eventim apollo hammersmith
fri 30 manchester academy

MYTICKET.CO.UK | PRIMUSVILLE.COM

KILIMANJARO **AN ACTION! & PCL PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH WME**

FROM LOCKDOWN TO ROCKDOWN!
2022 JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT HEAVIER...

URIAH 50 HEEP

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

SEPTEMBER 2022
FRI 30 GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL

OCTOBER 2022
SUN 02 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
MON 03 MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL
WED 05 LONDON THE PALLADIUM
THU 06 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
SAT 08 GATESHEAD SAGE
SUN 09 YORK BARBICAN
MON 10 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL
TUE 11 CARDIFF ST DAVID'S HALL

MYTICKET.CO.UK | URIAH-HEEP.COM

A KILIMANJARO & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH SIREN ARTIST MANAGEMENT

STEVE HACKETT
GENESIS REVISITED

FOXTROT at FIFTY
+ HACKETT HIGHLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 2022
09 SWANSEA ARENA
10 CARDIFF ST DAVID'S HALL
11 CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
13 AYLESBURY FRIARS WATERSIDE
14 TORQUAY PRINCESS THEATRE
16 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL
17 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION
18 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL
20 HULL CITY HALL
22 GATESHEAD SAGE
23 GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL
24 YORK BARBICAN
26 BUXTON OPERA HOUSE
27 GRIMSBY AUDITORIUM
28 NORTHAMPTON ROYAL & DERNGATE
30 SHEFFIELD CITY HALL

OCTOBER 2022
01 MANCHESTER O_2 APOLLO
03 SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION
04 IPSWICH REGENT THEATRE
05 BATH FORUM
07 LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
08 LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC
09 BRIGHTON CENTRE
11 BOURNEMOUTH PAVILION
12 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO HAMMERSMITH

MYTICKET.CO.UK
HACKETTSONGS.COM

A KILIMANJARO PRESENTATION
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH SOLO

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT myticket.co.uk

MESHUGGAH

Swedish extreme tech-metal pioneers
MESHUGGAH return with their
ninth studio manifest „Immutable“

CD Digipak | Colored 2LP | Cassette | Digital

OUT NOW!

ATOMIC FIRE

Exclusive editions and merchandise:
www.eyesoremerch.com/brands/atomic-fire
www.facebook.com/atomicfirerecords | www.instagram.com/atomicfirerecords

EYESORE MUSIC ada

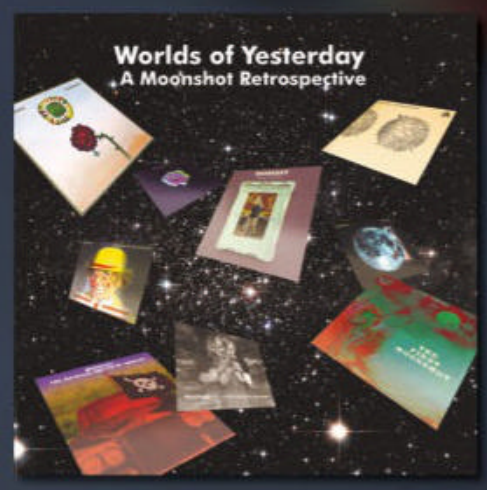
DAVID K JONES

days in corners

THE DEBUT SOLO ALBUM FROM THE BASS PLAYER
WITH PLENTY, MOONSHOT AND THE SWAN CHORUS.
RECORDED WITH PETER GODDARD AND BRIAN HULSE
GUESTS INCLUDE TIM BOWNESS, HENRY ROGERS
AND JOHN WILKINSON - ALBUM COVER BY STEFAN HEPE.

"A TOUCHING AND TASTEFUL DEBUT" JORDAN BLUM, PROG
AVAILABLE FROM BURNING SHED

ALSO FROM BURNING SHED..



PROG PRESENTS...

Discovering

Tigermoth Records

Tigermoth Records was founded around 10 years ago as a release outlet for Rob Reed's band Magenta, but has now expanded to include all of the musician's related work, from the electronic-inspired Chimpan A and *Cursus* albums, to the rock band Kiama. Also included is the folk-inspired work of Les Penning and *Tubular Bells* producer Tom Newman, alongside solo releases from Magenta singer Christina Booth and the all-star prog/classical crossover project Kompendium, featuring Steve Hackett and Francis Dunnery among many others.

Rob Reed

"I get bored easily only doing single musical style projects," says label founder Reed. "Tigermoth has allowed me to successfully explore all the different styles of music and work with amazing musicians. I hope that the label has built up a reputation of high production values, in the music and in the presentation of the products. We love to do special limited editions too, with all the extras including 5.1 and bonus mixes."

What's on your free Tigermoth digital album.
Download the 16-track sampler from www.bit.ly/tigermoth_sampler

1 Magenta
***The Lizard King* (single edit)**
Taken from *The Twenty Seven Club*

2 Cyan
I Defy The Sun
Taken from *For King And Country*

3 Kompendium
Mercy Of The Sea
Taken from *Beneath The Waves*

4 Robert Reed
Marimba
Taken from *Sanctuary II*

5 Chimpan A
Sam's Song
Taken from *Chimpan A*

6 Rob Reed
***Man Of Feathers* (edit)**
Taken from *Cursus 123 430*

7 Tom Newman
Dance Of The Stems
Taken from *A Faerie Symphony II*

8 Magenta
Demons
Taken from *Home*

9 Kompendium
Lilly
Taken from *Beneath The Waves*

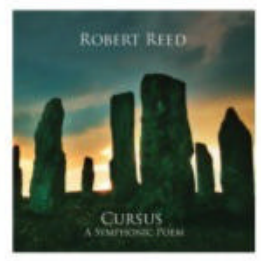
10 Robert Reed
The Hat
Taken from *The Ringmaster Part Two*

11 Christina
The Light
Taken from *The Light*

12 Tubular World
A Minor Tune
Taken from *Tubular Bells*

13 Les Penning With Robert Reed
In Dulci Jubilo
Taken from *Return To Penrhos*

14 Kiama
Cold Black Heart
Taken from *Sign Of IV*



15 Robert Reed
Cursus (A Symphonic Poem)
Taken from *Cursus – A Symphonic Poem*

16 Cyan
The Sorceror
Taken from *For King And Country*

How to download your free digital sampler from Tigermoth Records

1. Visit www.bit.ly/tigermoth_sampler. Type it straight into your browser – do not type the URL into a search engine.
2. Click 'Buy Digital Album' and enter '0' as the price.
3. Enter your email address and country, then download the album to your computer.
4. Enjoy your new music!
Discover more Tigermoth music by visiting www.tigermothshop.co.uk

Ed's Letter

Spotify

Stream the Prog 129 playlist at www.spoti.fi/37b5JQO

Hello, and welcome to the new issue of *Prog*. You can, should you so wish, and I do recommend it, listen to Rush's *Moving Pictures* approximately twice while reading Philip Wilding's excellent in-depth look at the making of the album (page 32). I did exactly that every time I read the story, and each time I gained more from an album that's been one of my favourites for the last 40 years, as I suspect it is for many of you too. Also, what a joy to see Geddy and Alex being interviewed together (via the magic of technology) for the first time in ages; their natural bonhomie and sense of fun all too evident, conveyed by Philip's words, as they recalled writing and recording the songs that redefined the band against a backdrop of stunning Canadian scenery.

As usual, we strive to give you a good balance of the old and the new. The former comes from Annie Haslam recalling the making of Renaissance's classic 1975 album *Scheherazade And Other Stories* (page 46), Caravan founding member Dave Sinclair looking back over 50-plus years making music (in one of the last pieces I commissioned from the late Malcolm Dome), 80s trio Craft recall making their lone album and we pay tribute to the late Procol Harum frontman Gary Brooker.

Of the new, Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson talks about his latest musical venture, Envy Of None, and we also have new interviews about current music from Tiger Moth Tales, Kaprekar's Constant, Michael Rother, Jenny Hval, Michael Romeo, Pattern-Seeking Animals, The Emerald Dawn and more. Plus a wonderful sampler from Robert Reed's Tigermoth Records for you to enjoy (not to mention the four *Moving Pictures* postcards also included!).

I'd say that represents the fascinating diversity and heritage of progressive music. I hope you all agree. We're back with you on May 27 (June 24 in the USA) with even more progressive delights. I do hope you join us.

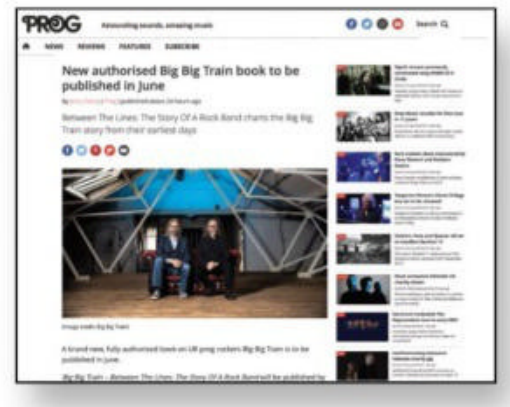
Prog on...

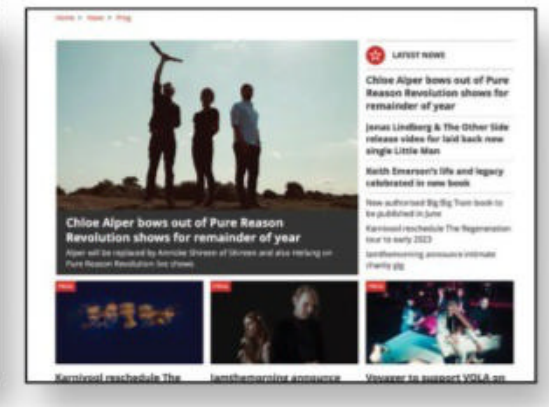
Jerry Ewing – Editor

You can subscribe to *Prog* at www.magazinesdirect.com. See page 112 for further details.

FIND US ONLINE AT **progmagazine.com**

Get your daily fix of prog news and features at www.progmagazine.com





Kaipa

URSKOG

In Stores 29th April 2022

Legendary Swedish progressive, folk-fusion band Kaipa present their 14th studio album.

Featuring Hans Lundin joined by Per Nilsson, Jonas Reingold, Darby Todd, Patril Lundström & Aleena Gibson.

Available as Ltd CD Digipak, Gatefold 180g 2LP + CD & as Digital Album

PURE REASON REVOLUTION

ABOVE CIRRUS

In Stores 6th May 2022

PRR return with their fifth studio album, expanding the band's sound palette ever further into atmospheric, cinematic psych-prog!

Available as a Ltd CD, Gatefold LP+CD & Digital Album

Pre-order from *BurningShed.com* for a signed postcard while stocks last.

JAMES LABRIE

BEAUTIFUL SHADE OF GREY

In Stores 20th May 2022

James LaBrie (Dream Theater) presents his first solo album in nearly 9 years, teaming up with **Paul Logue** (Eden's Curse), as well as **Chance LaBrie**, **Marco Sfogli**, and **Christian "Chrism" Pulkkinen** for a sound that is more acoustic in approach, but no less dynamic and powerful.

Available as Ltd CD Digipak, 180g LP + CD & as Digital Album

SONY MUSIC

Available from amazon.co.uk

www.insideoutmusic.com

INSIDE OUT MUSIC

Bloody Well Write

Send your letters to us at: *Prog*, Future Publishing, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London, W2 6JR, or email prog@futurenet.com. Letters may be edited for length. We regret that we cannot reply to phone calls. For more comment and prog news and views, find us on facebook.com under *Prog*.

FROM ONE DAVE TO ANOTHER

I think it is great that you have taken an open mind as to what is prog. The only problem is that by casting such a wide net, as it were, you seem to be neglecting some genuinely important prog artists.

One musician, in particular, who is surely deserving of a full article is Dave Stewart. I first heard him in the early 80s when alongside Barbara Gaskin he had a huge hit with their version of *It's My Party*. I quickly worked out he was not that guy from the Eurythmics and eagerly tracked down all the other recordings he was doing in the 80s and decided that he is basically a musical genius. Even the comedy record he made with Neil from *The Young Ones* has serious progressive credentials. From there I investigated everything I could find that he was involved with going all the way back to the late 60s, and what an absolute musical treasure trove I found: Egg, Hatfield And The North, National Health, Bruford and of course his collaborations with Steve Hillage. He truly is a fantastic keyboard player and brilliant arranger, so how about a full article featuring him or at least some of the many groups he has been involved with?

David Simon, via email

We're well aware of Dave Stewart, David. Unfortunately he owns the copyright to almost all photos of him and his previous bands, and we've been unable to strike a deal with him for usage. Without photos we get nowhere. It's not for want of trying though, trust us. We at Prog are very big fans of Dave and his heritage — Ed

BARRED?

It is interesting that there was no reference to Martin Barre in either of the interviews with Ian Anderson in *Prog* 126. I feel Tull fans are owed an explanation.

Martin Barre is a great guitarist, ever present in the Tull line-up for all albums until now, since replacing Mick Abrahams in 1968/69. Jimi Hendrix was one of his admirers — check out *We Used To Know*, for example, from 1969's *Stand Up* and you'll understand why.

Without a doubt, Ian Anderson is a musical genius and, since Abraham's departure, he has unquestionably been the band's leader, as frontman, and the one responsible for the composition of nearly all of the music and lyrics.

Dave "Not that guy from Eurythmics" Stewart with Barbara Gaskin, circa 1982.

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

I was fortunate enough to see Jethro Tull, with Martin Barre in the line-up, at Salisbury City Hall in 2008. In 2012, I saw Ian Anderson plus backing band at the same venue; the second half of the performance comprised entirely of Jethro Tull songs. I believe that the band included all the personnel who recorded the new record, *The Zealot Gene*. Prior to 2012, Martin Barre expressed some bemusement at his exclusion, while making it clear that his enthusiasm to participate in future recordings remained undiminished. It does appear that, in effect, Martin Barre, for some reason, was sacked from the band without ever being informed; the eviction process must have felt protracted and opaque from his perspective. Removing Martin Barre marked the end of the band for me. Calling *The Zealot Gene* a Jethro Tull album is about getting more punters to buy it. In my opinion, it's an Ian Anderson album, you only need to look at the cover. It is Ian Anderson plus backing band or Ian Anderson's Jethro Tull.

Ian Anderson has long since been misidentified by many as Jethro Tull. He has always been the most important member of the band, and Jethro Tull could not exist without him. However, the individual member of a band, no matter how important, is a lesser entity than the band itself.

Phil Graffiti, Salisbury

The issue of Martin Barre's departure has been dealt with in previous interviews, Phil. While we understand it remains a bugbear for some fans, we felt that a new interview about a new album that an ex-member doesn't play on doesn't need all that old ground rehashed. — Ed

NO CLOSER TO *RELAYER*

Thank you for the great article on the classic Yes album *Close To The Edge* [*Prog* 128]. I never managed to see Yes in their

TWEET TALK

Follow us on twitter.com/progmagazineUK

THE PINEAPPLE THIEF
@pineapplethief
The Pineapple Tea

THE PINEAPPLE THIEF

MIKE PORTNOY
@MikePortnoy
After 36 years, I finally got to see my 1st DT show last night! It was a wonderful evening and it was such a pleasure to spend time with my old friends again

WRIGGLES
@psb_wriggles
The shorts are out!! End of exciting tweet.

LETTER

So, Rush's (probably) greatest album, *Moving Pictures*, is set for reissue. This set off a slew of very vivid memories from 1981 when I was 15 about to turn 16. First was the album review in the *Melody Maker* written by Steve Gett. Instead of proclaiming its greatness, the review was pretty scathing! The album and review provoked a strong reaction from fans, whose missives (including mine) appeared in the letters page the following week. One fan's phrase stuck out, too: "You stink Rush." I couldn't believe these views and wrote that Rush were changing and still producing great music. Gosh, the earnestness of youth!

Some other memories: back in those days, post-punk dividing lines were still in force. Lads in my school – an all-boys' school in Liverpool – couldn't believe that me, a Yes/Genesis/Rush/Camel fan, could also have bought U2's *Boy* and Echo And The Bunnymen's *Crocodiles* the previous year. Their biting contempt and derision only confirmed the fact that I fitted in nowhere amongst my peers. This was made worse by the fact that my father had died in 1978 when I was 12. I clung to music as an adolescent to the point where Neil Peart's lines in *Tom Sawyer* – *'His reserve, a quiet defence/ Riding out the day's events'* – encapsulated what daily life felt like for me then.

These days, we can like anything, without worrying about silly tribal boundaries (though the debate about who is going to be playing bass in the reconfigured Porcupine Tree line-up seems to be exercising a few folk!). We can listen to it wherever we like, more or less, too… though I will buy the new *Moving Pictures* edition. Not because I need to listen to it – I know it as much as I know myself – but because it will remind me of a time when music meant as much to me as the life I had then and have now. Which is also why I still go to the newsagent to buy *Prog*. The owner orders one copy and I buy it. She sometimes comments on the covers. We chat about what music she likes. That connection still speaks to the values we should continue to hold dear.

John Gough, Coventry

This issue's star letter wins a goodie bag from The Merch Desk at www.themerchdesk.com.

heyday, but have been to all their UK tours since 2014 when they performed the album in full. However, can I express my disappointment that the forthcoming tour will no longer be covering *Relayer*? I have been desperate to see songs from this album live, but they never appear on the setlists. I was genuinely excited when the 2020 tour was announced to cover this album and held onto my ticket through the pandemic with this event to look forward to. And now it is no more.

With all due respect to the great songs that Yes have written over the years, I don't want to see another 'greatest hits' evening, although my disappointment could be alleviated with some choice songs from *Tormato* and *Drama*, which equally get avoided. (Though I did see the latter in full on the 2016 tour.)

Tim Harvey, Leeds

HOLD THE PAGE!

I've long thought *Prog* should switch to a download format instead of a physical CD, but at the same time had concerns about the switch. There are pros and cons. One of the (possible) cons was audio quality; I was worried that the downloads would be MP3. I'm pleased to see that has not been the case. The beauty and complexity of prog rock deserve to be experienced in full (or even high) definition.

One of the pros is that I no longer have to worry about the CD being snapped in two by the magazine having been aggressively folded into my mailbox, or the CD simply being missing due to a hole in the plastic wrapper (it has happened). A con: the label-based collections seem to have less stylistic variety; on the other hand, a pro: more tracks. I'm hoping there will be a way for independent and unsigned artists to be included going forward.

One last (tongue-in-cheek) con: there's so much material in an issue that I can't read it all in one sitting, so after ripping the CD to my media server, I would use it as a bookmark. Now what will I do to keep my place? Perhaps a *Prog* bookmark could be included in a future issue?

Carl Green, Florida, USA

Our Yes feature, as seen in the last issue.

NIGHTWISH
@NightwishBand
Demo session for #n10

NIGHTWISH

MIKE VENNART
@Vennart
There are no certainties in life other than death, taxes and hearing Ed Sheeran in an Uber

MARK KELLY MARATHON
@markke11y
Ian's drums are so dusty that he's getting a new kit instead of cleaning it

PROG

Future PLC, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London, W2 6JR
Email prog@futurenet.com
twitter.com/ProgMagazineUK
instagram.com/progmagazine
You can also find us on **facebook.com** under Prog

Editorial
Editor **Jerry Ewing**
Deputy Editor **Natasha Scharf**
Art Editor **Russell Fairbrother**
Production Editor **Vanessa Thorpe**
News Editor **Grant Moon**
Reviews Editor **Dave Everley**
Associate Editor **Jo Kendall**
Content Director **Scott Rowley**

Contributors
Jeremy Allen (JA), Joe Banks (JB), Mike Barnes (MB), Jordan Blum (JMB), Chris Cope (CC), Stephen Dalton (SD), Isere Lloyd-Davis (ILD), Daryl Easlea (DE), Dave Everley (DEV), Ian Fortnam (IF), Polly Glass (PG), Eleanor Goodman (EG), Rob Hughes (RH), Will Ireland (WI), Emma Johnston (EJ), Jo Kendall (JK), Hannah May Kilroy (HMK), Dom Lawson (DL), Fraser Lewry (FL), Dannii Leivers (DLE), Dave Ling (DML), Alex Lynham (AL), Gary Mackenzie (GMM), Emily MacNevin (EM), Rhodri Marsden (RHM), Julian Marszalek (JM), Giulia Mascheroni (GMA), Chris McGarel (CMG), Grant Moon (GRM), Kris Needs (KN), Kevin Nixon (KNI), Alison Reijman (AR), Chris Roberts (CR), Paul Sexton (PS), Johnny Sharp (JS), Nick Shilton (NS), Sid Smith (SS), Francesca Tyer (FT), Phil Weller (POW), David West (DW), Philip Wilding (PW), Rich Wilson (RW), Holly Wright (HW)

Cover image
Image: **Hugh Syme**

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com
Advertising Manager **Helen Hughes**
helen.hughes@futurenet.com
Account Director **Steven Pyatt**
steve.pyatt@futurenet.com
Account Manager **Ayomide Magbagbeola**
ayomide.magbagbeola@futurenet.com

International Licensing and Syndication
Prog is available for licensing and syndication. To find out more contact us at **licensing@futurenet.com** or view our available content at **www.futurecontenthub.com**.
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**

Subscriptions
Online orders & enquiries **www.magazinesdirect.com**
UK order line & enquiries **0330 333 1113**
Overseas order line & enquiries **+44 (0) 330 333 1113**
Email enquiries **help@magazinesdirect.com**
CRM Director **Louise Dudfield**

Subscription delays
Disruption remains within UK and international delivery networks. Please allow up to 7 days before contacting us about a late delivery to help@magazinesdirect.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance, Tom Reynolds**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Senior Ad Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Manager **Keely Miller**

Management
Managing Director – Music **Stuart Williams**
Head of Art & Design – Music **Brad Merrett**

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd
Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

ISSN 2045-2260

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The manufacturing paper mill and printer hold full FSC and PEFC certification and accreditation.

All contents © 2022 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein. If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

INTRO

IF IT'S OUT THERE, IT'S IN HERE

BILL BRUFORD MAKES *A SONG AND DANCE*

The legendary drummer unveils his personally curated, career-spanning box set, with cuts from his solo career and his tenures with Yes, King Crimson and other prog greats.

Bill Bruford releases his career-spanning six-CD box set on April 29 through BMG.

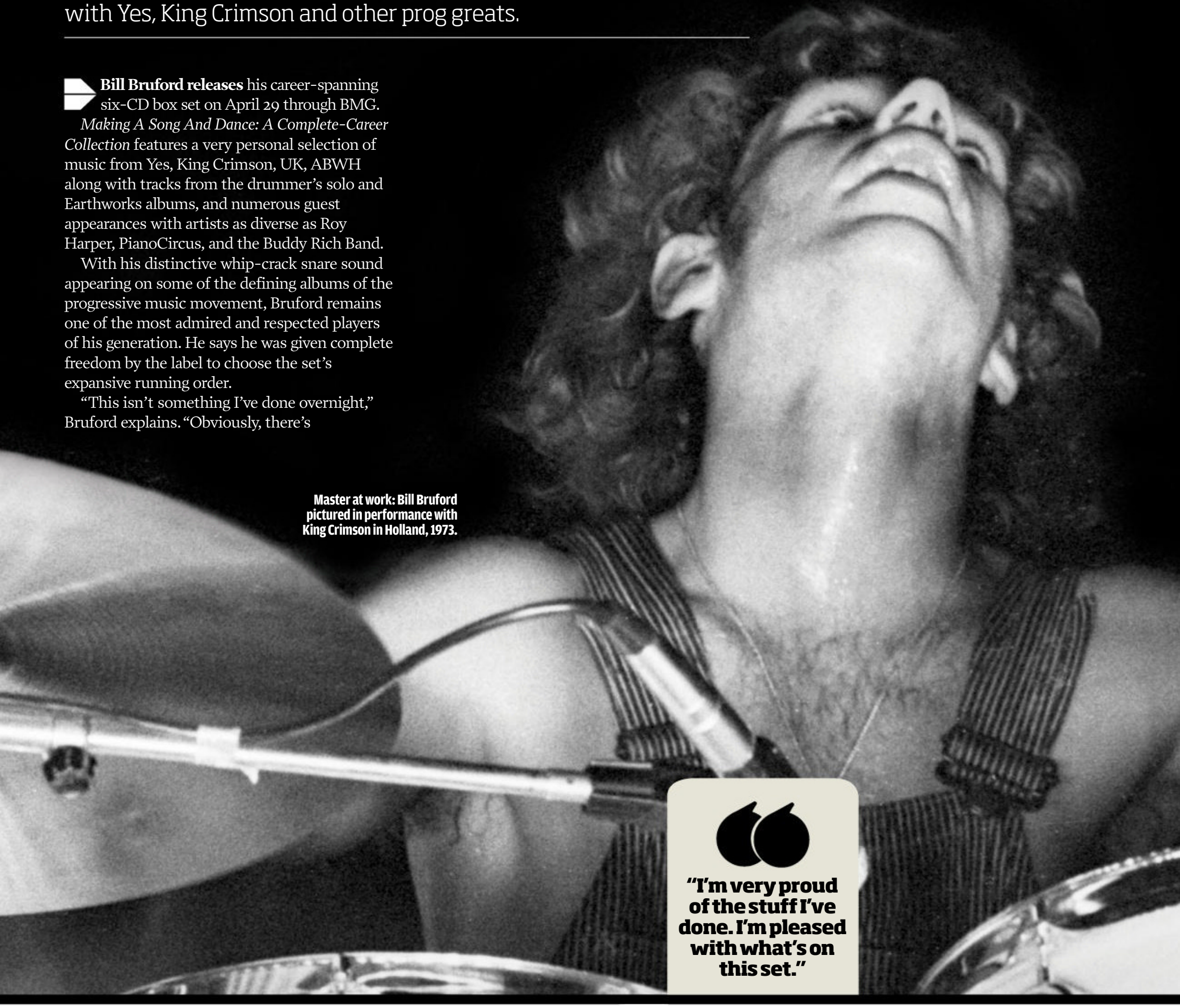
Making A Song And Dance: A Complete-Career Collection features a very personal selection of music from Yes, King Crimson, UK, ABWH along with tracks from the drummer's solo and Earthworks albums, and numerous guest appearances with artists as diverse as Roy Harper, PianoCircus, and the Buddy Rich Band.

With his distinctive whip-crack snare sound appearing on some of the defining albums of the progressive music movement, Bruford remains one of the most admired and respected players of his generation. He says he was given complete freedom by the label to choose the set's expansive running order.

"This isn't something I've done overnight," Bruford explains. "Obviously, there's a certain amount of editorial stuff going on. It took something like six or seven months to select the 70 tracks that are spread across these six discs."

Alongside the CDs, the package comes with rare and unseen photos and includes a detailed essay written by Bruford himself, which provides a wealth of information about the music. The whole set is presented with outer box artwork, gatefold CDs, and booklets designed by Bruford's longtime artist and graphic designer, Dave McKean.

With his customary fastidiousness, Bruford (who retired from live performance in 2009 and is currently involved with academic writing) has organised the music into four distinct categories: "There's the collaborations, involving the work with Yes and Crimson, for example. The Bruford band and Earthworks come under



Master at work: Bill Bruford pictured in performance with King Crimson in Holland, 1973.

"I'm very proud of the stuff I've done. I'm pleased with what's on this set."

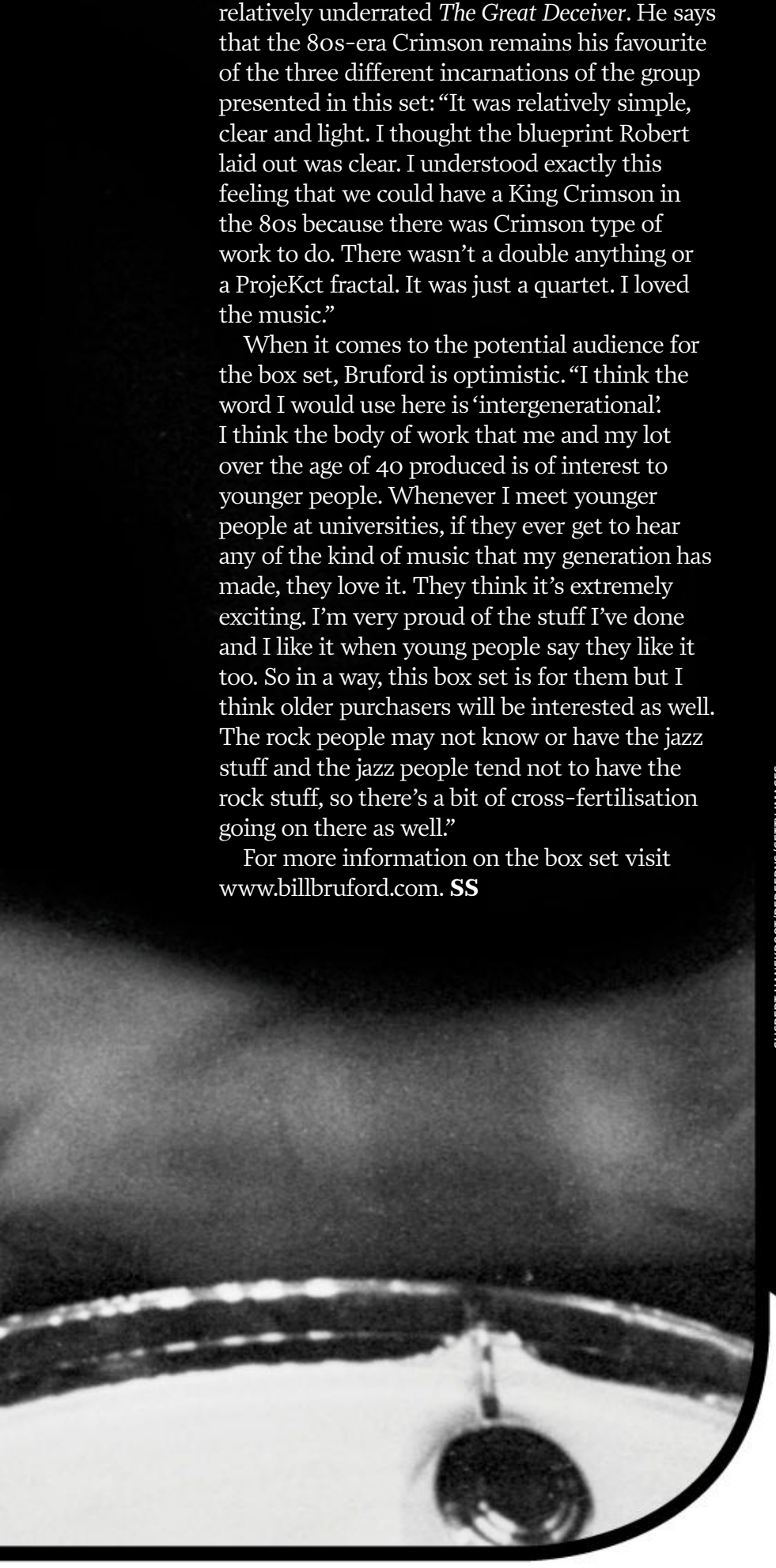
the heading of 'The Composing Leader'. My work in duos, firstly with Patrick Moraz in the 80s and with Michiel Borstlap in the 2000s showcases improvisation, and there's also a disc that has my contributions as a special guest."

Given the sheer range of the bands and musicians Bruford has been associated with over a 40-year career, getting permission from different copyright holders was a major task. He admits there are one or two omissions — pieces from his extensive discography that he would have liked to include but for which permissions were unobtainable. "That said, I'm pretty proud and pleased with what's on this set."

Bruford's personal choices aren't always obvious. Naturally *Starless* — one of the most popular tracks in the Crimson repertoire, from 1974's *Red* — is included, but so too is the relatively underrated *The Great Deceiver*. He says that the 80s-era Crimson remains his favourite of the three different incarnations of the group presented in this set: "It was relatively simple, clear and light. I thought the blueprint Robert laid out was clear. I understood exactly this feeling that we could have a King Crimson in the 80s because there was Crimson type of work to do. There wasn't a double anything or a ProjeKct fractal. It was just a quartet. I loved the music."

When it comes to the potential audience for the box set, Bruford is optimistic. "I think the word I would use here is 'intergenerational'. I think the body of work that me and my lot over the age of 40 produced is of interest to younger people. Whenever I meet younger people at universities, if they ever get to hear any of the kind of music that my generation has made, they love it. They think it's extremely exciting. I'm very proud of the stuff I've done and I like it when young people say they like it too. So in a way, this box set is for them but I think older purchasers will be interested as well. The rock people may not know or have the jazz stuff and the jazz people tend not to have the rock stuff, so there's a bit of cross-fertilisation going on there as well."

For more information on the box set visit www.billbruford.com. **SS**



GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

This month, Intro was compiled by
Jerry Ewing
Jo Kendall
Martin Kielty
Dom Lawson
Dave Ling
Grant Moon
Rhodri Marsden
Natasha Scharf
Sid Smith
Phil Weller
Rich Wilson

ROXY MUSIC'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

Bryan Ferry and band mark their half-century with 13 concerts, and reissues.

Live is the drug: Manzanera, Ferry, Mackay and Thompson return to the stage.

MATT KENT/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES

Bryan Ferry, Phil Manzanera, Adam MacKay and Paul Thompson will reunite and take Roxy Music out on tour in 2022 to celebrate the band's 50th anniversary. The landmark year will also be marked by the issue of special anniversary vinyl editions of the band's eight albums.

Roxy's last outing was 11 years ago for their sold-out and critically lauded For Your Pleasure tour in 2011. This time their tour begins on September 7 at Toronto's Scotiabank Arena, with subsequent dates across that month taking them to Washington DC, New York (Madison Square Garden), Philadelphia, Chicago, Austin, Dallas, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

This will be followed by three UK dates in October: Glasgow's OVO Hydro (October 10), Manchester's AO Arena (October 12), with the outing concluding at The O2 London on October 14. They will be supported by the suitably super-stylish and highly progressive artist Annie Clark, aka St Vincent.

Tickets are available at www.ticketmaster.com, with the band offering numerous VIP packages including premium tickets, limited edition merch and more.

The 50th anniversary albums are on half-speed cut vinyl with revised artwork and a deluxe gloss laminated finish. The band's 1972 debut *Roxy Music* and 1973's *For Your Pleasure* were released on April 1, with *Stranded* and *Country Life* due on April 29. The remaining catalogue will be released in pairs across the remainder of 2022.

For the latest information go to www.roxymusic.com. **GRM**

IT'S OFFICIAL: TIM BOWNESS HAS A *BUTTERFLY MIND*

The No-Man artist marks 40 years in music with new LP.

Tim Bowness will drop his seventh, star-studded solo album on June 17 via InsideOut. Mixed and mastered by his No-Man co-member Steven Wilson, *Butterfly Mind* coincides with Bowness' 40-year anniversary of being in the music business, and follows his acclaimed 2020 album, *Late Night Laments*.

"I finished *Late Night Laments* on the day they announced the first lockdown," he says, "then I didn't write anything new for eight months. But in October 2020 I wrote the track *Lost Player*, and that's where this one really kicked off."

Tim Bowness: 40 years in the game, man and boy...

PRESS/MARK WOOD

Preceded by first single *Always The Stranger*, *Butterfly Mind* sees Bowness on adventurous, avant-garde form, with a core band comprising regular collaborator, guitarist Brian Hulse, bass great Nick Beggs and ex-Elbow drummer Richard Jupp. Guest contributors include Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson, VdGG's Peter Hammill, Big Big Train's Greg Spawton and Magazine keyboardist Dave Formula. More at www.timbowness.co.uk. **GRM**

JAMES LABRIE BACK WITH SOLO ALBUM

The acoustic sound of *A Beautiful Shade Of Grey* was inspired by Led Zeppelin.

Nifty shades of grey. L-R: Marco Sfogli, Paul Logue, James LaBrie, Chance LaBrie, Christian Pulkkinen.

PRESS/ THOMAS EWERHARD

Dream Theater vocalist James LaBrie is set to release his fourth solo album, *A Beautiful Shade Of Grey*, on May 10 via InsideOut. It's been nine years since his last solo LP, *Impermanent Resonance*, and this new one was born during lockdown, following a chance meeting at an airport in Scotland in early 2020.

"The last show Dream Theater played on the Distance Over Time Tour was in Glasgow," LaBrie tells *Prog*. "The following day [February 24], I was heading through the airport to catch my plane home and I bumped into Paul Logue, who plays bass in [rock band] Eden's Curse. We'd been talking about getting together and writing something for a long time. Dream Theater were supposed to be doing another couple of legs of touring but in the middle of March 2020 everywhere shut down. Paul texted me and suggested that we start to write the album together."

In an unexpected turn, musically *A Beautiful Shade Of Grey* moves away from the progressive metal that to date has defined LaBrie's career. Instead, the new tracks have an acoustic base, giving the record a classic rock feel more reminiscent of Led Zeppelin than Dream Theater.

"The way I originally wanted to approach it," LaBrie says, "was to do an acoustic album, like classic Zeppelin and how they touched on those [acoustic] elements. I had all these ideas, riffs and melodies that I sent over to Paul, and he began to work on them. It started off with the idea of just having acoustic guitars, but I was worried that it might turn into a campfire album. I felt we could do more justice to the songs by adding a full ensemble, so we brought in a band. We've also done a cover version of Zeppelin's *Ramble On*. I remember as a kid thinking it was a great tune, and we're happy with the way that it came out."

Aside from Logue and LaBrie, the album also features contributions from the vocalist's long-term collaborator, guitarist Marco Sfogli, keyboardist Christian Pulkkinen and LaBrie's son, Chance, who is already an accomplished drummer with metal band Falset. "Chance came in," says his dad, "and was writing and playing the drums, and he got really involved in the arrangements, so it became a collective thing. I'm really psyched for people to hear this album."

The album was preceded in March by the online single, *Devil In Drag*. **RW**

"I wanted to do an acoustic album, in the way Zeppelin would touch on those elements."

For the latest updates visit James' website, www.jameslabrie.com.

INTRO extras

ASIA'S DELUXE BUDOKAN BOX SET

Supergroup Asia will release *Asia In Asia: Live At The Budokan Arena, Tokyo 1983*, on June 10 via BMG. Previously available only on VHS, the recording captures the band (Geoff Downes, Steve Howe and Carl Palmer) in Japan, with special guest Greg Lake stepping in for founder John Wetton, who left before the tour. This deluxe box set contains two LPs, two CDs, a 40-page book, video Blu-ray, printed memorabilia and a pin badge. For pre-orders go to asiaband.lnk.to/budokanPR.

The Tangent's Andy Tillison promises prog epics (and a touch of Motown) on new album.

PRESS/SALLY COLLYER

THE TANGENT'S NEW 'MEGA PROG' RECORD

Andy Tillison breaks down *Songs From The Hard Shoulder*, out on InsideOut in June.

Prog quintet The Tangent mark their 20th anniversary with their 12th studio album. Out on June 10 via InsideOut, *Songs From The Hard Shoulder* follows 2020's *Auto Reconnaissance*, and the band's keyboardist/leader Andy Tillison describes it as "a mega prog album with three epics over 17 minutes long and a short, Tamla Motown song.

"Every song is entirely different and unrelated to one another," he adds, "because one of my favourite things about prog rock is how often it breaks the rules. We didn't feel the need to connect the songs together."

Teasing the album's epic tracks, Tillison describes one as "very Tangent-like. It's melodic, uplifting and socially aware – it's about reconnecting with people after the lockdown. Then there's our longest ever instrumental, which leans on our Canterbury and Frank Zappa influences and is quite an adventure. The last one is about a homeless person I met in Leeds, which has more Nine Inch Nails and Mars Volta in it, with a lot of soundscapes. We all got really involved in the album's construction – it's probably the most advanced one we've done."

Despite its complexity, the record was recorded in Tillison's spare bedroom. "We emptied the walk-in wardrobe to put a drum kit in," he says, "ran some cables through and just started recording. I was never at home in big recording studios, and this was actually the quickest recording session we've had!"

For more information, head to www.thetangent.org. **POW**

OPETH'S *IN CAUDA VENENUM* EXTENDED AND REISSUED

Mikael Åkerfeldt and band are on tour with Mastodon.

Swedish prog metal maestros Opeth will release *In Cauda Venenum (Extended Edition)* on May 13 via Atomic Fire.

Originally released in 2019 on Nuclear Blast, *In Cauda Venenum* was the band's 13th album and earned them some of the best reviews of their then-30-year career

This extended, three-CD version contains both the English and Swedish language versions of the record, while the third disc features three previously unreleased bonus tracks, presented in both English and Swedish. These are *The Mob/Pöbeln*, F*reedom & Tyranny/Frihet & Tyranni* and *Width Of A Circle/Cirkelns Riktning*. The English version of this latter track hit streaming platforms in March.

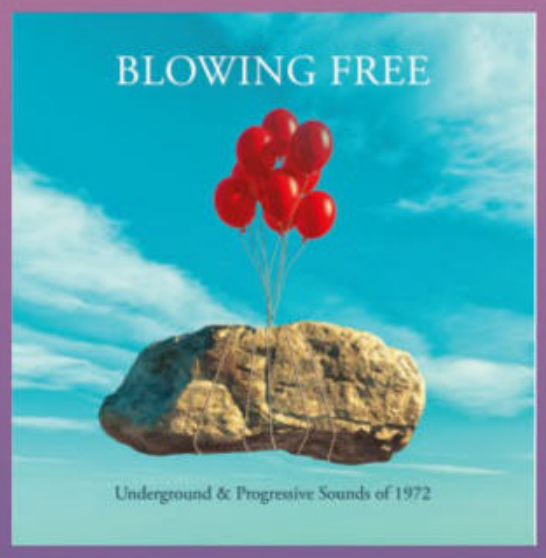
The set is also available in a vinyl 'Connoisseur Edition', remastered for the format by Opeth's leader Mikael Åkerfeldt. Both versions can be pre-ordered at opeth.afr.link/InCaudaVenenum. Opeth are currently on a co-headline tour with Mastodon: for dates go to www.opeth.com/tour-dates. **GRM**

Opeth: extending themselves...

PRESS

VARIOUS

'BLOWING FREE – UNDERGROUND AND PROGRESSIVE SOUNDS OF 1972'
(4CD BOX SET)



- The next release in our series of compilations celebrating the so-called "underground" rock music – 'Blowing Free – Underground And Progressive Sounds Of 1972' is a 4CD clamshell box set which gathers together over five hours of music from 1972, a momentous year in rock music and one which would continue to see Progressive music in all its forms become a dominating force with the album buying public.

JADE WARRIOR

'JADE WARRIOR'
(REMASTERED & EXPANDED CD)

- This expanded Esoteric Recordings edition has been newly remastered from the original Vertigo Records master tapes and features an early, previously unreleased version of 'Telephone Girl' as a bonus track. It also restores the original album artwork and features a booklet with new essay.

'LAST AUTUMN'S DREAM'
(REMASTERED EDITION)

- New remastered release of the classic 1972 album by the legendary Jade Warrior. Remastered from the original Vertigo master tapes. With fully restored artwork and a new essay.

FAMILY

'A SONG FOR ME'
(REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

- This new two-disc edition of this classic album has been newly remastered from the master tapes and also includes 14 bonus tracks drawn from singles and BBC Radio sessions from August 1969 and January 1970. This release also features an illustrated booklet with a new essay and is a fitting tribute to a much-treasured band.

NEKTAR

'SOUNDS LIKE THIS'
(2CD REMASTERED & EXPANDED EDITION)

- Unavailable officially for some years, this Esoteric Recordings' edition is most welcome and has been newly remastered and expanded to include an additional CD featuring over 70 minutes of alternate versions and live material.
- The digipack set restores the original album artwork and features an illustrated booklet with essay and recollections from band members.

HAWKWIND

'DREAMWORKERS OF TIME – THE BBC RECORDINGS 1985-1995'
(3 CD BOXSET)

- Three CD clamshell boxed set 'Dreamworkers of Time – The BBC Recordings 1985-1995' features all of Hawkwind's live recordings and sessions made by the BBC between 1985 and 1995.
- Newly remastered, with the 1988 In Concert performance and the 1985 and 1995 Maida Vale studio sessions appearing on CD for the first time, making 'Dreamworkers of Time – The BBC Recordings 1985-1995' an essential release.

ROGER CHAPMAN

'MOTH TO A FLAME – THE RECORDINGS 1979-1981'
(5CD REMASTERED & EXPANDED SET)

- A newly remastered five CD clamshell boxed set featuring the legendary Roger Chapman, including the classic albums 'Chappo', 'Live In Hamburg', and 'Mail Order' with an additional 25 bonus tracks drawn from studio out-takes and live recordings. The bonus material includes a stunning previously unreleased live set recorded for BBC Radio's In Concert programme in October 1979, studio out-takes and further live recordings made in Hamburg in January 1981. The set also includes an illustrated booklet with new essay and exclusive interviews.

B.B. BLUNDER

'WORKER'S PLAYTIME'
(2 CD REMASTERED EDITION)

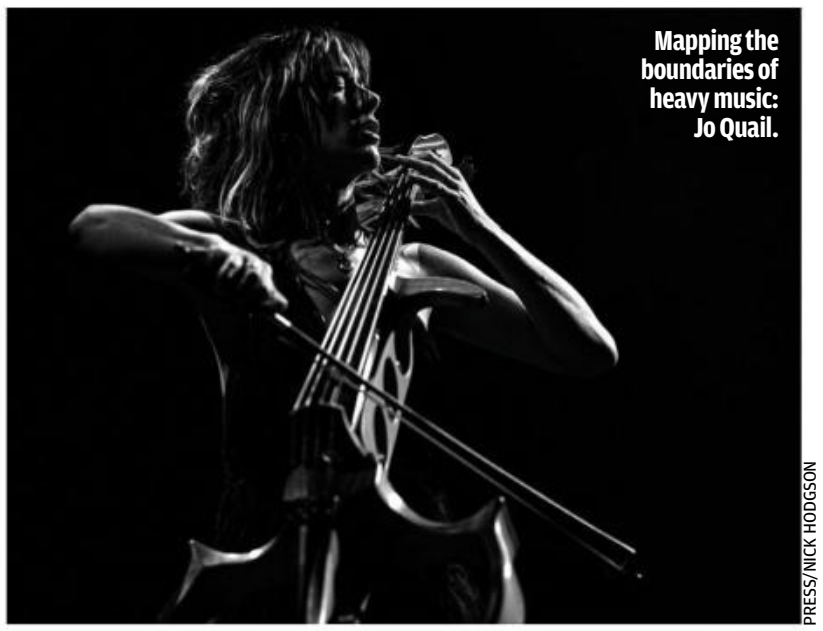
- This Esoteric Recordings edition has been remastered and is expanded to include two previously unreleased tracks recorded for the BBC Radio 1 Sounds Of The '70s programme which featured a different band line-up with vocalist Reg King (formerly with The Action), keyboard player Nick Judd and drummer Chris Hunt.The set also has an additional CD of out-takes from the Olympic Studios recording sessions.

Esoteric Recordings Remastering and Expanding the Classics

ESOTERIC RECORDINGS · CHERRY RED RECORDS
www.esotericrecordings.com

JO QUAIL'S FESTIVAL COMMISSION TO AIR

The cellist will unveil *The Cartographer* at Roadburn in April, with album to follow.



Mapping the boundaries of heavy music: Jo Quail.

PRESS/NICK HODGSON

Prog Award-winning cellist Jo Quail will debut her latest composition, *The Cartographer*, at the envelope-busting Roadburn Festival, in Tilburg, Netherlands, on April 23, with an album to follow on May 6 via the By Norse label.

The five-movement composition was specially commissioned by Roadburn owner Walter Hoeijmakers in 2019, and it's taken two years to materialise because of the Covid pandemic. Quail played at the 2019 festival, backing MONO, Myrkur and At The Gates, but she and Hoeijmakers had discussed the idea the month before, at the World Metal Congress in London.

"Walter wanted to explore the heaviness that's prevalent in classical music from my perspective," Quail tells *Prog*. "There was no time limit or boundaries, which is extremely liberating and a little bit frightening as a composer. If you're writing for a film, you have the film… but in my initial proposal I felt that 45-50 minutes would be the ideal length as, in my opinion, after that we need to take a breath."

The Cartographer began as a five-line poem, based on a signature Quail theme of cardinal energies: earth, air, fire, water and spirit. The musical details of the piece are being kept strictly under wraps until the debut performance at Roadburn, but Quail teases that the composition involves prime numbers, with the music mapped to the piece in unique, clever, and very progressive ways.

In March she unveiled a snippet of the composition, subtitled *The Terrain,* which featured her cello plus powerful brass, violin and vocalists too. For the performance itself Quail will be joined by 16 musicians, including members of the innovative Crossbones trombone collective. Quail's instructions to her live players sound tantalising: "At some point in the [lyric-less] score, one [vocal] direction is, 'sing like starlight'. Similarly for my violinist: 'You are the birds, fly as high as you can!'"

The winner of the Limelight trophy at the last Prog Awards back in 2019, Quail says she straddles many musical worlds: "I'm normally a soloist playing to baroque fans in a classical setting, contemporary music fans at Hellfest, and I received *Prog*'s Limelight Award. I think that's why Roadburn were interested in me." She's also recently toured with Amenra, AA Williams and Wardruna. **JK**

"There were no boundaries, which was liberating and a bit frightening."

There's more on The Cartographer and Roadburn Festival at www.roadburn.com. To pre-order the album www.joquail.co.uk.

INTRO extras

NOW ARRIVING: BIG BIG TRAIN BIOGRAPHY

Kingmaker Publishing will release the biography of UK proggers Big Big Train on June 16. Written by *Prog's* Grant Moon, *Big Big Train – Between The Lines* recounts the band's story, from their early days to their success with Top 40 albums *Grand Tour* and *Common Ground*. Illustrated with many previously unseen photographs, the coffee table-style book features interviews with past BBT members and stars including Genesis' Tony Banks. For pre-orders go to www.bit.ly/bbtbiog.

Charlie Griffiths: prog palaeontologist!

PRESS/ROSSJENNINGS

SOLO DEBUT FOR HAKEN GUITARIST

Charlie Griffiths gets heavy and digs deep on "palaeontology-based" *Tiktaalika*.

Haken guitarist Charlie Griffiths has announced the first details of his debut solo album. *Tiktaalika* is due on June 17 via InsideOut, and the London-based musician describes it as "the world's first palaeontology-based progressive metal album".

"It's inspired by a prehistoric creature called a Tiktaalik," Griffiths tells *Prog*. "You could describe it as a missing link species between fish and tetrapods, and one of the first creatures to crawl out of the water."

The guitarist has been with Haken since 2008, and to change things up from his work with them, Griffiths opted to use six-string guitars on the record as opposed to the eight-stringers he usually uses with that band. "My classic thrash side really came out," he adds, "as well as lot of Cynic [and] tech metal influences. There's also a song that sounds like King Crimson meets Gentle Giant, but heavier."

The nine-track album features Between The Buried And Me vocalist Tommy Rogers on lead single *Arctic Cemetery*. Other guest artists include ex-Textures frontman Daniël de Jongh, Serbian opera singer Vladimir Lalic (Organized Chaos), and drummer Darby Todd, who has played with Robert Plant, Devin Townsend and Martin Barre.

"It was really fun to write all the music and lyrics without having to compromise," Griffiths says, "and to find out what I would do on my own."

More at www.facebook.com/charlie.griffiths.guitarist. **POW**

KEITH EMERSON'S CAREER CELEBRATED IN NEW BOOK

Due this autumn, an in-depth look at the ELP star's life.

Rocket 88 have revealed details and pre-order information for *Keith Emerson*, a lavish upcoming book celebrating the keyboardist's life and legacy.

Veteran music writer Chris Welch has spoken to the late star's family, friends and colleagues to discuss Emerson's early life, his rise to fame with The Nice and ELP, right up to The Keith Emerson Band. As well as conducting new interviews with Emerson's ex-wife and children, Welch also spoke to stars including Carl Palmer, Rick Wakeman, Lee Jackson, Jeff 'Skunk' Baxter, Geoff Downes and many more. The book will include 200 photographs, many drawn from his family's private archive.

Keith Emerson is due for publication in autumn. The 'classic' hardback edition will retail at £40, with an augmented 'signature' edition at £250. Fans wishing to pre-order at a special discount and/or have their name printed in the book can register their interest at www.keithemersonbook.com. **GRM**

Mean and Moogy: Keith Emerson to be celebrated.

COURTESY OF ESTATE OF KEITH EMERSON

FAD GADGETS

Rhodri Marsden on three of the latest must-have gizmos currently putting the prog in progress.

IBANEZ HYDRA

Isn't there an old prog rock proverb that goes, "The more necks a guitar has, the better the music"? If there is, it's of course balderdash, but fair play to Ibanez for constructing this cyberpunk monster of an instrument, which appears on Steve Vai's album, *Inviolate*. Looking more like a weapon you'd use to vanquish orcs in *World Of Warcraft*, it has three vacuum tubes, wheels, pulleys, cogs, multiple pickups and an ethernet port. Vai probably hasn't had this much fun since he got rid of his Fisher Price Activity Centre. Oh, and you can't buy one, because only one exists, and Vai's got it, and probably wants to keep hold of it.
www.bit.ly/ibanez-hydra

LINKBUDS

Some people prefer headphones which block out the outside world. Others like to be able to hear what's going on around them, particularly when they're trying to cross two lanes of fast-moving traffic on the Chelmsford ring road. These new Sony earbuds are for the latter, with – would you believe – a hole in the middle to allow ambient noise to pass through. This so-called 'open ring' technology is said not to compromise the listening experience, although nearby juggernauts, ambulances and pneumatic drills will, of course, be louder.
www.bit.ly/linkbudssony

SPARK MINI

Back in the day, the smaller the guitar amplifier, the worse it sounded. I speak as someone who, at his first concert performance at the age of 17, turned up to the venue with a tiny Yamaha practice amp and was openly laughed at by the sound man. More than 30 years later, Spark have managed to pack a 40-watt combo into something even smaller, and they describe its sound as 'room filling'. Of course that depends on the size of the room, but with 33 amp models and 43 effects built in, who's arguing?
positivegrid.com

MY PROG HERO

Inspiring the wider music world...

Franz Di Cioccio (left, with PFM bandmate Patrick Djivas) has made *un grande impatto* on Saxon's Nigel Glockler (inset).

PRESS/ORAZIO TRUGLIO

PRESS/SWILLUS

NIGEL GLOCKLER

The Saxon drummer waxes lyrical over **Franz Di Cioccio**, singer and fellow sticksman for Italian proggers Premiata Forneria Marconi.

"People might not expect a drummer from Saxon to be into a prog band that features flute and violin, but bollocks to that — I *adore* Premiata Forneria Marconi! They feature my favourite instrument, the Mellotron. Apart from Bill Ward of Black Sabbath, I was never really into heavy metal drummers. I love classical music and fusion, so with PFM it was like all these rolled into one.

"I first heard PFM's single *Celebration* on the car radio, so as soon as the album *Photos Of Ghosts* [1973] came out I bought it, and I've been a convert ever since. I love that they have so many different styles — one minute they're playing jazzy fusion, the next they're almost baroque, and of course they're great at rock music.

"PFM, and Franz, were big influences on my own playing. I can't be specific about the parts that affected my style because *all* of it did. Franz could be so subtle. On those first few PFM albums he reminds me of Michael Giles on King Crimson's debut, and before you know it he's blasting away. At times it's like listening to Chick Corea.

"Franz could be so subtle, then before you know it he's blasting away..."

"PFM have recorded in their native Italian and also in English, but I will listen to them in any language. *Photos Of Ghosts* had lyrics by Pete Sinfield, who of course was involved with Crimson and ELP. After that I bought the two Italian albums which had come out previously, *Storia Di Un Minuto* and *Per Un Amico*. They were so great that I started getting the whole catalogue. And when the live album, *Cook*, came out in 1974, I just couldn't stop playing it. I had my drum kit set up in my bedroom and I would play along to it endlessly wearing headphones. For a while my parents hated me.

"Unfortunately I've never met Franz but there was a near-miss. On my first tour with Saxon in late 1981 in Italy we did a TV playback and PFM were also due to play. I was so thrilled, but the production team rushed us out to our tour bus, and as we pulled away I saw theirs arrive and I cried, 'No-o-o-o!'

I haven't seen PFM live either, though I have watched endless YouTube videos." **DML**

Carpe Diem is out now on Silver Lining Music. See www.saxon747.com for more.

PROG IN BRIEF

PRESS/HARVEYWALLER

Flamboyant *Fire* star **Arthur Brown** (right) releases his new 'psychedelic blues rock' album, *Long Long Road*, via Prophecy/Magnetic Eye on June 24, which is also Brown's 80th birthday. For the latest news, his site is (of course) www.thegodofhellfire.com.

Acclaimed English psych duo Dave Mclean and Paul Lake, aka **The Chemistry Set**, mark their 35 years of sonic adventures with new album, *Pink Felt Trip*. It's out on June 5 through Fruits De Mer – for more info and orders go to www.bit.ly/chemistryset.

Australia's **Karnivool** have been forced to re-reschedule the European leg of their Regeneration Tour to 2023, opening in Frankfurt on January 16 and ending in Birmingham on February 10. More info and full dates are at www.karnivool.com.

ALEX HENRY FOSTER

& the long shadows

•NOT ALL WONDERS HAVE BEEN LOST•

It Has Been a Long Way Back To You...

UK & EUROPE SUMMER TOUR 2022

03.-05.06 BEVERUNGEN (DE) @ ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL
07.06 HAMBURG (DE) @ NOCHTSPEICHER
09.06 ODENSE (DK) @ KANSAS CITY
10.06 FLENSBURG (DE) @ KÜHLHAUS
11.06 BREMEN (DE) @ LILA EULE
12.06 BIELEFELD (DE) @ FORUM
13.06 AMSTERDAM (NL) @ PARADISO
15.06 ANTWERP (BE) @ TRIX
16.06 COLOGNE (DE) @ YARD CLUB
17.06 FRANKFURT (DE) @ NACHTLEBEN
18.06 DUDELANGE (LU) @ FÊTE DE LA MUSIQUE
19.06 STUTTGART (DE) @ CLUB CANN
21.06 LONDON (GB) @ OSLO CLUB
22.06 NOTTINGHAM (GB) @ BODEGA

23.06 GLASGOW (GB) @ BROADCAST
24.06 HUDDERSFIELD (GB) @ THE PARISH
25.06 MANCHESTER (GB) @ THE DEAF INSTITUTE
26.06 BRISTOL (GB) @ THEKLA
29.06 MARBURG (DE) @ KFZ
30.06 BERLIN (DE) @ PRIVATCLUB
20.07 NUREMBERG (DE) @ Z-BAU
22.07 POLIČKA (CZ) @ COLOUR MEETING FESTIVAL
23.07 VIENNA (AT) @ RHIZ
24.07 SÉLESTAT (FR) @ ROCK YOUR BRAIN FEST
04.08 PARIS (FR) @ SUPERSONIC
05.08 ZURICH (CH) @ PAPIERSAAL
10.08 MUNICH (DE) @ BACKSTAGE
12.08 NUREMBERG (DE) @ BRÜCKENFESTIVAL

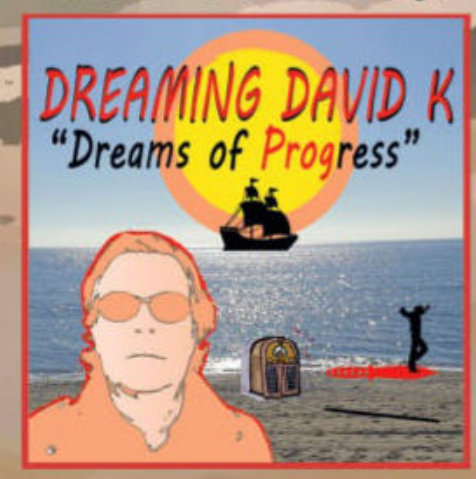
MORE DATES TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

Get the debut album by Dreaming David K

MR PASSIVE PROGRESSIVE

"Plenty for fans of pure prog"
-prog magazine

ALSO OUT NOW



ORIGINAL 70s INFLUENCED
21st CENTURY MUSIC MAN

"A breath of fresh air"
-the progmeister

downloads and streaming available via site

Order jewelcase CD albums from:

www.DREAMINGDAVIDK.com

What Strange Beasts for these strange times.

WHAT STRANGE BEASTS

Washington go-getters tap into classic harmonies on their psych-soaked debut.

WHETHER SHARING LEAD vocals or building harmonies, there's something special about a group whose members all sing together, and that's one of the many striking qualities of new US act What Strange Beasts. Admittedly, guitarist Cat Eddie only offers the occasional vocal on their hugely promising debut, *The Maestro's Tale*, but between them keyboardist Ben Ruby, bassist Aaron Kremer and drummer Jonathan Maxwell make a distinctive chorus.

"We came to that kind of organically," says Maxwell. "The first track we started playing as a band was *The Field*. We had the lyrics up on the screen so we could track the arrangement, but then when the vocal part came in *all* of us started singing. And we were like: 'Well, if that's what we're going with, that's what we're going with!'"

That happy accident, in July 2017, evolved into an MO. Maxwell tackles the high parts, Kremer takes the low end and de facto lead vocalist Ruby handles the middle. Inevitably there's a touch of The Beatles and Crosby, Stills & Nash here, maybe Seals & Crofts and Strawbs too.

The Beasts all live in Bryn Mawr-Skyway, a small suburb south of Lake Washington. Maxwell and Kremer first met at a 2015 Halloween showing of *Psycho*, with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra playing Bernard Herrmann's score live to picture. They started jamming (Pink Floyd's *Money* was a favourite), then Maxwell brought in Ruby, whom he'd met via the Seattle 'art jam' scene. Ruby's a classical pianist with a background in media composition (and a Steinway grand dominating his living room), and he introduced friend Eddie to the mix. Soon the four were sinking their teeth into Maxwell's early template for *The Field*.

"From the first time all four of us were together," says Ruby, "we instantly felt like we were a band. But we had to figure out what kind of band we were. Space rock? Psych rock? Glam? But our sound started to centre around prog rock, inspired by acts like The Moody Blues, Pink Floyd, Marillion, Jethro Tull."

The Maestro's Tale is a concept album loosely based on The Hero's Journey, the hoary, archetypal story at the heart of most myths, fairy tales and Hollywood movies. Some songs are breezily catchy (*Up In The Air, You Are Lost*), others more dramatic (the eastern-spiced *Eyes On The Road*, contemplative closer *Precipitation*) and brief lysergic instrumentals amp up the psych (*Sublimation*, *Drift,* the very-Floyd *Debris*). Producer Don Gunn (Death Cab For Cutie, Toyah & The Humans) has elicited pedigree performances from the quartet, and given them a clear, crunchy US rock sound.

As yet unsigned, the band plan to expand on the few live shows they've played, and are working on album two: an ambitious double LP called *Starlight's Castaways*. "I've never been in a band that works this well together," says Maxwell. "Someone will bring in an idea, we'll all flesh it out, and it becomes a song. There's a wonderful lack of ego. We're all just here to help elevate each other's music, and that's where we get our sound from." **GRM**

"We're all just here to help elevate each other's music, and that's where we get our sound from."

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Aaron Kremer *(bass, vocals)*, **Ben Ruby** *(keys, vocals)*, **Cat Eddie** *(guitar, vocals)*, **Jonathan Maxwell** *(drums, vocals)*

SOUNDS LIKE

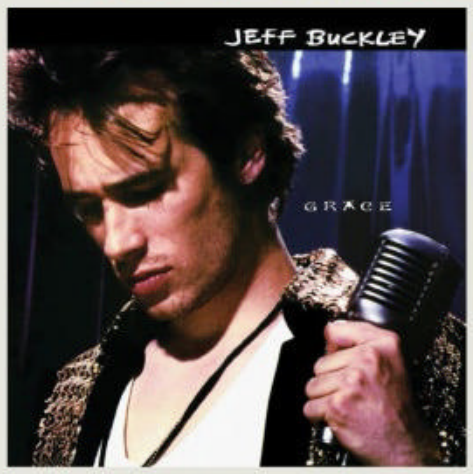
The best US Moody Blues tribute band playing through Spock's Beard's backline. This is harmony-rich, plangent, promising prog

CURRENT RELEASE

The Maestro's Tale is out now via Bandcamp

WEBSITE

www.whatstrangebeasts.bandcamp.com



JEFF BUCKLEY

GRACE

(Columbia, 1994)

In the early 80s Jeff Buckley's first band, Mahre Bukham, would tear into Rush's *The Spirit Of Radio* and Yes' *Long Distance Runaround* with precocious skill and teenage fervour. The singer/guitarist called such songs "thinking man's music".

Born in 1966 and raised in Orange County, Buckley loved the good stuff like Rush, Yes, and Genesis, Led Zeppelin and Joni Mitchell. Later, studying guitar at Hollywood's Musicians Institute, he would lock himself away and soak up the work of Al Di Meola, Allan Holdsworth, and Pat Metheny. He appreciated the rich harmonic language of Bartók, Ravel, Duke Ellington. So when he eventually upped sticks to New York to pursue his art, he was never going to make a conventional rock record.

Grace would be Buckley's only LP (he drowned three years after its release, aged just 30) and although it went on to be hailed as a classic album, it was a slow burner. On its release in 1994 some reviewers didn't quite know what to make of it. Some judged the record on Buckley's impossible physical beauty and Byronic charm, dismissing it as indie-schmindie college rock. Inconveniently for the hacks, his music didn't really chime with the prevailing grunge scene, and wasn't quite alt-rock either.

Buckley could belt with the best of them, but also had the most exquisite, almost operatic falsetto. His guitar playing was angular, edgy, but never too shreddy, and *Grace*'s darkly romantic songs were imbued with a questing spirit. If at a genetic level this owed something to the artist's late, estranged father Tim Buckley, it owed more to the music that charged up his youth.

Written with ex-Captain Beefheart guitarist Gary Lucas, *Grace*'s brooding, oblique opener *Mojo Pin* slides restlessly between scales, its unorthodox chords never quite landing where expected. It rises and falls, flows and recedes, with Buckley's dynamic vocal performance coming from a sublime place. The title track itself is unconventional too, with a proto-math rock guitar hook and clever descending verse structure. Buckley's almost corporal, theatrical delivery elevates the whole to a higher artistic plane.

In the sexy break-up tune *Last Goodbye* (its stunning string arrangement by Karl Berger, who worked with John McLaughlin and, later, Coheed And Cambria), and in Buckley's definitive, hear-a-pin-drop take on Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* (270m Spotify hits and counting), the parallels with other proggy bands are clear.

Thom Yorke, Matt Bellamy and Bruce Soord are just three artists who share Buckley's performative DNA. *So Real*'s wailing fuzz guitar break could be Jonny Greenwood, and the enigmatic intro of *Dream Brother* (covered by TesseracT on their 2012 EP *Perspective*) wouldn't be out of place on a Steven Wilson record.

"There's scads and scads of music out there," Buckley said once. "Amazing things that will give you inspiration, really strange things that you need to be open enough to find. You can't be closed-minded about it."

Grace is thinking (wo)man's music, made by a thinking man.

GRANT MOON

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Our far-out trip to far-flung prog

Jyocho: planting the seeds of progressive music in Japan.

PRESS/ SHOKO ISHIZAKI

JYOCHO

The Japanese quartet aiming to bring their blend of prog, pop and traditional music to the wider world.

Japanese quartet Jyocho started out in 2016 as a solo project by guitarist Daijiro Nakagawa, but like their name — which carries concepts of growing, learning and reacting — the group soon expanded.

From Kyoto, Nakagawa is joined by vocalist/keyboardist Netako Nekota, bassist Sindee and flautist Yuuki Hayashi. Their latest album *Let's Promise To Be Happy*, on No Big Deal Records, illustrates their blend of prog, pop and traditional genres along with influences from around the world.

"The general public in Kyoto gravitates towards K-pop," says Nakagawa. "But we have a venue here called Growly, and there are many alt-rock and prog bands there. Prog has strong roots, but it's a minor genre yet to reach the general public."

He admits that Kyoto's "weaker in terms of mobilising fans" than Japan's capital city, Tokyo, but believes Jyocho and other artists can help change that. "Tipographica and guitarist Tsuneo Imahori have been hugely influential for me," he adds.

Nakagawa believes Jyocho were playing the music he heard in his head from the start, and recommends the track *All The Same* from the new album as an "accessible" introduction to their art. But that doesn't mean there's no progression with each new album. "I'm always writing songs about my daily discoveries and feelings. As I grow as a person, I think that the philosophy of the songs will be updated.

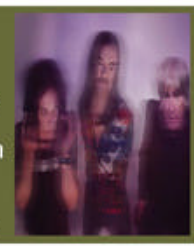
"As I've continued my musical activities and as I've gotten older, I've come to think that it's beautiful to face yourself, deepen yourself. It's very important to compare yourself with other people, but I think that *you* are the starting point. I want people to focus inward. I hope that it will give everyone a chance to face themselves."

That's the theme behind *Let's Promise To Be Happy*, which Nakagawa says has been received in the way he'd hoped. "I want to tour the album everywhere. We're hard at work rehearsing now. When pandemic things settle down, I'd like to meet as many fans as possible, so please look forward to that!" **MK**

"Prog has strong roots, but is yet to reach Kyoto's public."

See www.jyocho.com for more information.

PROG IN BRIEF



The brilliant **The Lickerish Quartet** (right) – formed by former Jellyfish members Roger Manning Jr, Eric Dover and Tim Smith – return with third EP, *Threesome Vol. 3*, on May 20 via Stranger Danger Records And Tapes. More at www.thelickerishquartet.com.

Peter 'Tiger Moth Tales' Jones has joined proggers **The Bardic Depths**. They release their second album, *Promises Of Hope*, on June 24 via Robin 'Cosmograf' Armstrong's label, Gravity Dream. For details and ordering go to www.gravitydream.co.uk.

Romancing the stone: Vivien Lalu.

PRESS/ ANTHONY DUBOIS

LALU

French soundtrack composer embraces pop-prog with an all-star guestlist.

AS THE SON of Noëlle and Michel Lalu of 70s French band Polène, Vivien Lalu was born into prog.

"It's true," he says with a laugh. "When my mother was pregnant with me she was playing a Minimoog onstage, and I guess that was a prenatal influence. Prog was my parents' life, and it's mine, too."

Awash with high-profile guests, the third studio album to bear Lalu's surname, *Paint The Sky*, marks a radical departure from its predecessors. In fact, Lalu doesn't seem to mind if readers skip over his 2005 debut, *Oniric Metal*, and 2013's *Atomic Ark* to go straight to his latest release. "They were made a long time ago at a point where I was 22 years old and obsessed with heavy guitars," he admits. "I see *Paint The Sky* as a reboot; I'm starting afresh."

This new album was made in collaboration with a British singer of some repute. Lalu and Damian Wilson were introduced in 2002 by none other than Arjen Lucassen after the latter invited the Frenchman to attend rehearsals for the live debut of his project Star One in Amsterdam. The pair hit it off right away and made plans to work together, though their schedules were difficult to align until now.

Wilson's voice glides ethereally over the music, which at times sounds like Yes at their most commercial. Lalu grins like the proverbial Cheshire Cat over our Zoom conversation when this comparison is made. "Damian was perfect for the formula I had in mind for this album," he states, "which was kind of a modern, [*90125*-era] Yes-style sound."

The album also features a slew of guest contributors including: Dream Theater's Jordan Rudess; ex-Kansas vocalist Steve Walsh; drum legend Simon Phillips; Roy Harper bassist Tony Franklin; and Jens Johansson, keyboard wizard of Stratovarius and Ritchie Blackmore's reinvented Rainbow. Some, including Rudess and Johansson, were returning guests, but Lalu still finds it hard to believe his new-found connection with Steve Walsh.

"My mum used to play Kansas' music when I was inside her belly, so it's crazy that Mr Walsh is on my record," he marvels.

With a multiple-album deal in place for Lalu with Frontiers Records, Damian Wilson has now signed up for a second record (or a fourth, depending upon one's view) and Lalu is already three songs into the writing process.

While Lalu (the band) have performed live in the past, Vivien is prepared to wait until the situation around Covid-19 becomes clearer, and also for his profile to rise. "It was bold for Frontiers to have taken me on, because when I signed with them I had 97 listeners on Spotify — that's now climbing rapidly," he chuckles.

Expect those numbers to rise exponentially, because *Paint The Sky* represents an extraordinary fusion of the depth and artistry of progressive music, intertwined with the accessibility of pop at its best.

"I really hope that people will like my record," concludes Vivien with an endearing sincerity. "It was made with love." **DML**

"My mum used to play Kansas when I was inside her belly, so it's crazy that Steve Walsh is on my record."

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Vivien Lalu *(keyboards)*, **Jelly Cardarelli** *(drums)*, **Joop Wolters** *(guitars, bass)*, **Damian Wilson** *(vocals)*

SOUNDS LIKE

Uplifting prog-meets-pop, like Yes at their most commercial

CURRENT RELEASE

Paint The Sky is out now on Frontiers

WEBSITE

www.vivienlalu.com

Official Progressive Albums Chart

The prog top 30 albums

March 2022

Compiled by Official Charts Company

1. **MARILLION** An Hour Before It's Dark *(EARMUSIC)*
2. **TANGERINE DREAM** Raum *(EASTGATE MUSIC/KSCOPE)*
3. **GENESIS** The Last Domino? *(UMC/VIRGIN)*
4. **RADIOHEAD** Kid A Mnesia *(XL RECORDINGS)*
5. **TAME IMPALA** The Slow Rush – B-Sides & Remixes *(FICTION)*
6. **JETHRO TULL** The Zealot Gene *(INSIDEOUT)*
7. **THE FLOWER KINGS** By Royal Decree *(INSIDEOUT)*
8. **D'VIRGILIO, MORSE & JENNINGS** Troika *(INSIDEOUT)*
9. **PINK FLOYD** A Momentary Lapse Of Reason *(PARLOPHONE)*
10. **SPIRIT** Twelve Dreams Of Dr Sardonicus *(ESOTERIC)*
11. **JENNY HVAL** Classic Objects *(4AD)*
12. **ARJEN ANTHONY LUCASSEN'S STAR ONE** Revel In Time *(INSIDEOUT)*
13. **MASTODON** Hushed And Grim *(REPRISE)*
14. **TIM BOWNESS & GIANCARLO ERRA** Memories Of Machines *(KSCOPE)*
15. **AMORPHIS** Halo *(ATOMIC FIRE)*
16. **PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING** Bright Magic *(PIAS)*
17. **CULT OF LUNA** The Long Road North *(METAL BLADE)*
18. **MOGWAI** As The Love Continues *(ROCK ACTION)*
19. **MARILLION** Fugazi *(PARLOPHONE)*
20. **VON HERTZEN BROTHERS** Red Alert In The Blue Forest *(DOING BEING MUSIC)*
21. **DREAM THEATER** A View From The Top Of The World *(INSIDEOUT)*
22. **VOIVOD** Synchro Anarchy *(CENTURY MEDIA)*
23. **BIG BIG TRAIN** Welcome To The Planet *(ENGLISH ELECTRIC RECORDINGS)*
24. **NIGHTWISH** Once *(NUCLEAR BLAST)*
25. **YES** The Quest *(INSIDEOUT)*
26. **JETHRO TULL** Benefit *(PARLOPHONE)*
27. **FRANK ZAPPA** Zappa OST *(UMC)*
28. **OPETH** Blackwater Park *(MUSIC FOR NATIONS)*
29. **JEAN-MICHEL JARRE** Welcome To The Other Side *(SONY)*
30. **MATT BERRY** Gather Up *(ACID JAZZ)*

FIND OUT MORE AT **WWW.OFFICIALCHARTS.COM**

WIN! SIGNED STEVEN WILSON BOOK

After several decades of making music, one-man enterprise Steven Wilson has finally published his long-awaited autobiography. In *Limited Edition Of One*, the musician, songwriter and remixer charts what he calls his "accidental career" from the early days of No-Man and Porcupine Tree right up to his most recent studio album, *The Future Bites*, with a side order of lists galore.

One lucky winner will receive a signed copy of the limited special edition, which comprises not only the hardback version of the book but also an additional supplement with 128 extra pages crammed with new material and previously unseen photos, as well as a 70-minute CD of 'audio illustrations' including musical extracts from school bands and early demos by Porcupine Tree and No-Man.

To be in with a chance of winning this brilliant prize, visit www.bit.ly/PROG129 and answer the following question:

Throughout his career, Steven Wilson has collaborated with an impressive list of artists, but which of these hasn't he worked with yet?

a) Marillion
b) Genesis
c) King Crimson

For more information see www.stevenwilsonhq.com.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: This competition will be open from April 22- May 27, 2022. By entering the competition you agree to our competition rules (available at www.futureplc.com/competition-rules). The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries received by the closing date. No employees of Future Publishing or any of its group companies or the employees of any entity which has been involved with the administration of this competition or any member of their households may enter this competition.

Now our turn...

The Editor
Jerry Ewing

BIRTH
Born
BAD OMEN

The Art Guy
Russell Fairbrother

SOFT FFOG
Soft Ffog
IS IT JAZZ? RECORDS

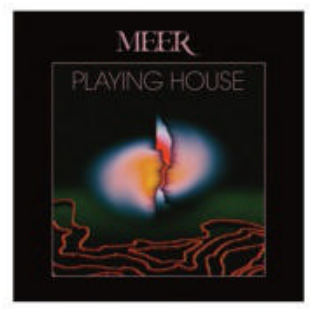
The Deputy Ed
Natasha Scharf

OH HIROSHIMA
Myriad
NAPALM

The Musician
Greg Spawton

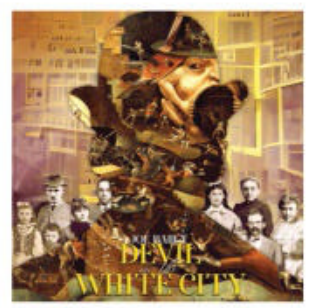
ELBOW
Flying Dream 1
POLYDOR

The Writer
Stephen Lambe



MEER
Playing House
KARISMA

The Reader
Peter O'Neill



JOE BAILEY
Devil In The White City
REFICUL RECORDS

OMEGA POINT

Ex-The Reasoning bassist teams up with Karnataka and Ghost Community players.

MATTHEW COHEN HAS plenty of prog pedigree. As a result, much is expected from his new band, Omega Point, whose debut album *A Great Escape* has just been released. In September 2019, Cohen played his farewell show with The Reasoning, at The Robin 2, and started to contemplate his next move. Unfortunately, it was the wrong one.

"Once I'd done the last Reasoning show, I went out with a heavy metal band called Nine Miles Down," he recalls. "We were supporting British Lion, and it was good fun, especially to play with one of my heroes, Steve Harris, but I actually *hated* the experience. I could see so many things being done and I'd be thinking, 'No, I wouldn't have done it that way…' So I made my decision then, that all my energy was going to go towards *this*. I had a few ideas and started putting them down, and then we really started off in January 2020. And then it all kicked off, didn't it?" [Laughs.]

Omega Point reunites Cohen with Ghost Community vocalist John-Paul Vaughan, and more recently with ex-Reasoning drummer Vinden Wylde (although, just to make things complicated, Ghost Community drummer Jake Bradford-Sharp plays on the album). Best of all, the forming of a new band has given Cohen the chance to work alongside guitarist Paul Davies, formerly of Karnataka and Panic Room, for the first time.

"I got back in touch with the guys and that was it," he says. "Especially when lockdown hit, it was just a case of, 'Let's make a fucking album! Let's make a *band*!' Paul got up with me at the farewell Reasoning show in 2019, and we've been talking for years and years. So this was that opportunity and I'm really happy about it."

With their line-up coming together in earnest in early 2020, Omega Point have had an awkward gestation. But *A Great Escape* is a startlingly cohesive piece of work: dark and melodramatic, each of its five lengthy tracks seems to tell a standalone story, although Cohen definitely isn't going to tell us what those stories are about.

"I can't!" he laughs. "The album does have a theme and it's nothing to do with Covid, because that's the last thing anybody needs! But I don't want to give the game away. That sounds like a twattish thing to do, but I don't want people to have preconceptions. All I will say that is that it's about seeing beauty from a different angle."

Armed with a classy debut and shitloads of enthusiasm, Cohen is relishing the prospect of getting back on the road and honing Omega Point as a live unit. Justifiably, the bassist absolutely loves it when a plan comes together.

"At the start I thought: 'If I'm going to do this, it's going to be done properly, and it's going to be with the right people, and it's going to be honest and mean something.' I just miss that thrill of being out with your mates and having a bloody good time, and playing music you've created and that you love. So yeah, *this* is the band and I'm in this for the long haul now." **DL**

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Matthew Cohen *(bass)*, **John-Paul Vaughan** *(vocals)*, **Paul Davies** *(guitar)*, **Rob Wilsher** *(keyboards)*, **Vinden Wylde** *(drums)*

SOUNDS LIKE

Versatile and sonically inventive neo-prog with a dramatic streak

CURRENT RELEASE

A Great Escape is out now through ROK Recordings

WEBSITE

www.omega-point.co.uk

"I miss that thrill of being out with your mates and playing music you've created and that you love."

On point! L-R: Vinden Wylde, Matthew Cohen, John-Paul Vaughan, Paul Davies, Rob Wilsher.

PRESS/ DUNCAN EVERSON

NEW RELEASES FROM APOLLON RECORDS

SONISK BLODBAD
The Shores Of
Oblivion

ADVENTURE
Tales of Belle
Part 1 - Across the Ocean

PYMLICO
Supermassive

AADAL
Lost Songs

LAUGHING STOCK
Zero
feat. Nad Sylvan

KRYPTOGRAF
The Eldorado Spell

KORNMO
Svartisen

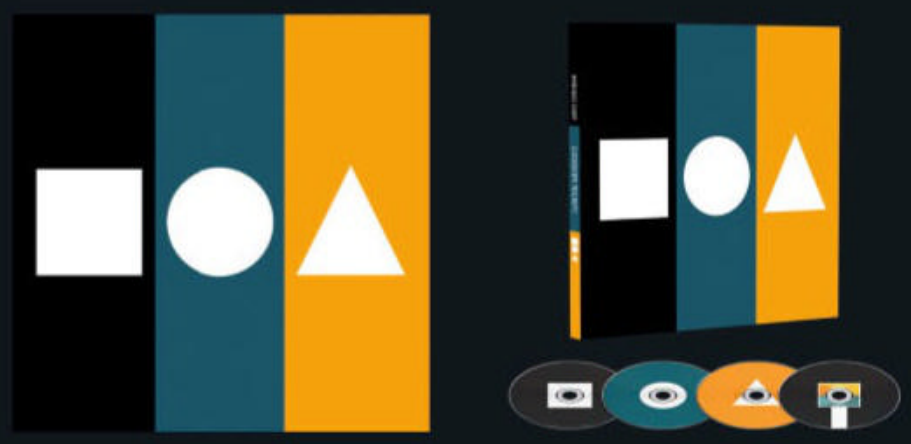
THE TRONOSONIC EXPERIENCE
The Shadow Vol.1

THE TRONOSONIC EXPERIENCE
The Shadow Vol.2

DISTRIBUTED BY: PHD™

apollonrecords.no
UK webshop > burningshed.com

Apollon RECORDS



MARIUSZ DUDA
LOCKDOWN TRILOGY

Limited Edition deluxe hardback book 4CD SET

All three instalments of the pandemic trilogy from Riverside / Lunatic Soul creative force Mariusz Duda, plus a previously unreleased bonus mini-album all presented in a 44 page hard back book, with artwork by Hajo Müller.

CD1 LOCKDOWN SPACES
CD2 CLAUSTROPHOBIC UNIVERSE
CD3 INTERIOR DRAWINGS
CD4 LET'S MEET OUTSIDE

Also available Interior Drawings LP available on orange coloured vinyl and black vinyl

20th May 2022

kscope

THE PINEAPPLE THIEF
GIVE IT BACK

Newly recorded re-worked classic tracks from their impressive catalogue now featuring Gavin Harrison.

13TH MAY 2022

2 disc CD & Blu-ray (Audio - Hi-res Stereo/DTS-HD MA 5.1/Dolby Atmos) in a digipak, a single black vinyl 140g LP, CD and Digital.

Also available **NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH**

The stunning filmed performance on Blu-Ray capturing The Pineapple Thief at their very best performing songs from their illustrious catalogue including for the first time live, songs from ***Versions of the Truth***.

"A must own collection" PROG MAGAZINE

Soundtrack also available on 2CD & double LP

For more information on these titles, and many more visit www.kscopemusic.com

TONY PATTERSON & DOUG MELBOURNE

Genesis-inspired British duo create an emotional tribute on their second album.

"WE DO SEEM to appeal to audiophiles," muses keyboardist Doug Melbourne, one half of Brit-prog duo Tony Patterson & Doug Melbourne. "Our first album, *The Divide*, was actually used as a reference recording for a very posh hi-fi brand, and for the new one we've had quite a few people saying: 'Yeah, I'm going to wait for the vinyl!'"

One listen to that well-reviewed 2019 debut LP and its even better successor, *Dark Before Dawn*, and the audiophile thing makes perfect sense. Articulating the writers' refined, thoughtful songcraft, the Patterson/Melbourne sound is tailored from polished synths, state-of-the-art string and drum programming, live guest musicians and — often stacked in big, bright harmonies — Tony Patterson's versatile, emotive voice.

The pair met as bandmates in top-end tribute act, ReGenesis. Before writing together they collaborated on 2007 Peter Gabriel tribute album, *Excellent Words*, and on Patterson's 2016 record *Equations Of Meaning*. The singer's tone falls on Gabriel-esque ground at times, but the new record is no *Foxtrot* rehash. The duo's rich, melodic and lushly produced music is closer to the song-centric sound of, say, Downes Braide Association, with many influences — from Steely Dan to Incognito — funnelling in. It's all buffed to a shine.

"I used to make a lot of TV adverts and library music," says Patterson, who's a fan of classic songwriters Jimmy Webb and Burt Bacharach. "Those demos have to sound polished and professional, so I think our sound comes from that. Even if you're just recording from home like us, you can get very well-produced music. There's no excuses these days."

PROG FILE

LINE-UP

Tony Patterson *(vocals, keyboards, guitars, programming, flute, string arrangements),* **Doug Melbourne** *(keyboards, programming, backing vocals)*

SOUNDS LIKE

The kind of high-end pop-prog that gets Richer Sounds staff nodding in respectful approval

CURRENT RELEASE

Dark Before Dawn is out now on Bad Elephant Music

WEBSITE

pattersonmelbourne.bandcamp.com

Adding Chapman Stick to *Dark Before Dawn* is Doug's bassist wife Carrie Melbourne, who has toured with Mike Oldfield. Sphere 3 guitarist Steve Anderson appears on opener *Maybe*, and *Reach Out*'s groove comes from ReGenesis' highly talented drummer Nigel Appleton.

"We've been more ambitious with this one," Melbourne says. "We were more confident about what we were doing. So there's less programming and more live playing, a few more acoustic instruments. It's a little broader in scope."

My Happy Place, *Flags* and *Old School Tie* make some astute observations about the world, while throat-tightening ballad *Stopping Time* is more personal. Patterson had been caring for his wife, Angela, who was diagnosed with motor neurone disease. One day he sat at the piano for a full 20 minutes and what poured out of him became, with Melbourne's help, the incredibly moving *Come Home (For Angela)*. "That was for her," says the singer, "just to say goodbye, really. I wanted to sit at the piano and get lost in everything."

Sadly, Angela died in August, aged only 57, but Patterson says that finishing the album helped with the grieving process: "It's very special for that reason. It wasn't 'the difficult second album', either — it was an easy album to write, despite the personal circumstances. Doug and I work quickly together, we're on the same wavelength. We've already got 20 minutes' worth of the next record."

Which is something to look forward to, on vinyl, or not. **GRM**

"Even if you're just recording from home, you can get very well-produced music. There's no excuses these days."

PRESS/NORMAN GLOVER

The audiophile-friendly Doug Melbourne and Tony Patterson.

Q&A

ROGER ENO

Brian's talented brother discusses inequality, Satie and using classical orchestration on his new solo album, *The Turning Year*.

Words: Sid Smith **Portrait:** Cecily Eno

Having made his recording debut alongside his brother Brian on 1983's *Apollo — Atmospheres & Soundtracks*, Roger Eno has enjoyed a busy career in music that includes being part of ambient 'supergroup' Channel Light Vessel alongside Bill Nelson, Kate St John and Laraaji in the 1990s, writing for stage plays and film, and over the years quietly amassing a body of more than 30 solo albums and collaborations that include Daniel Lanois, The Orb, Gaudi, David Gilmour, No-Man, Fovea Hex and many others. Then in 2020 he renewed his musical partnership with Brian on *Mixing Colours* for the prestigious classical label, Deutsche Grammophon, who have also released Roger's latest album, *The Turning Year*.

You recorded your latest album in between various Covid restrictions. How was that experience?
Yes, there was this little hiatus between not being able to move anywhere. I managed to play solo shows in Denmark and Finland, and then went onto Berlin's legendary Teldex Studio where it was done. I was with a chamber ensemble called Scoring Berlin, high-quality orchestral players who are really remarkable people. I know it sounds daft because I've been doing this for 40 years, but this was a real high point for me. The fact that I'm working in one of the best studios I've ever been in — that includes Abbey Road — and with the best engineer I've ever worked with, you know, everything just fell together beautifully.

"I was knocked over [to be working with Deutsche Grammophon]. It's a real feather in my cap."

You must be pleased to be working with Deutsche Grammophon as well?
Honestly, I was knocked over, to tell you the truth. I really was. It's a real feather in my cap, without question. Part of me is from a classical background. In my youth, it was the go-to label. Decca had quite a list at one time as well, but Deutsche Grammophon was the diamond. The other really good thing that happened to me recently was my old music college at Colchester, part of the University of Essex, gave me a doctorate. I cried actually when that happened. I thought: 'Hang on, should I start to take myself seriously?' [Laughs.]

You've said your music is written in response to the growing inequality and division you've seen in the UK...
I've got a very close friend who voted to leave Europe, which I didn't. He votes Conservative, which I don't. We still meet up for pints of porter [beer] in Norwich because we've known each other since college. However, he wishes that things could be as they used to be. It's so selective because you're forgetting all the kids that used to work down the mines and all these terrible sides to the fact that the British Empire, no matter how you want look at it, was built on blood. So, it's not an idyllic past he's looking at it. It's an illusion. What I am really wary about is any hint at nationalism because I think that it is really dangerous and it's also almost always misguided.

The slow graceful nature of your music is also sometimes reminiscent of Erik Satie's. Would you say that's fair?
Guilty as charged, and there's no shame in that for me. One of the key things Satie did was to leave things out rather than add things in. When I heard first heard his music, I thought: 'This is made out of three notes and it's utterly beautiful.' Someone who was interviewing me years ago made quite a perspicacious comment. He said Satie had a punk way of looking at it. When punk came out nobody thought to like play like Jeff Beck or another guitar wizard. They just thrashed the fuck out of what they had. I thought: 'Well, if Satie can make beautiful music out of very little technique, and I'm not knocking him for it, then I can do the same.'

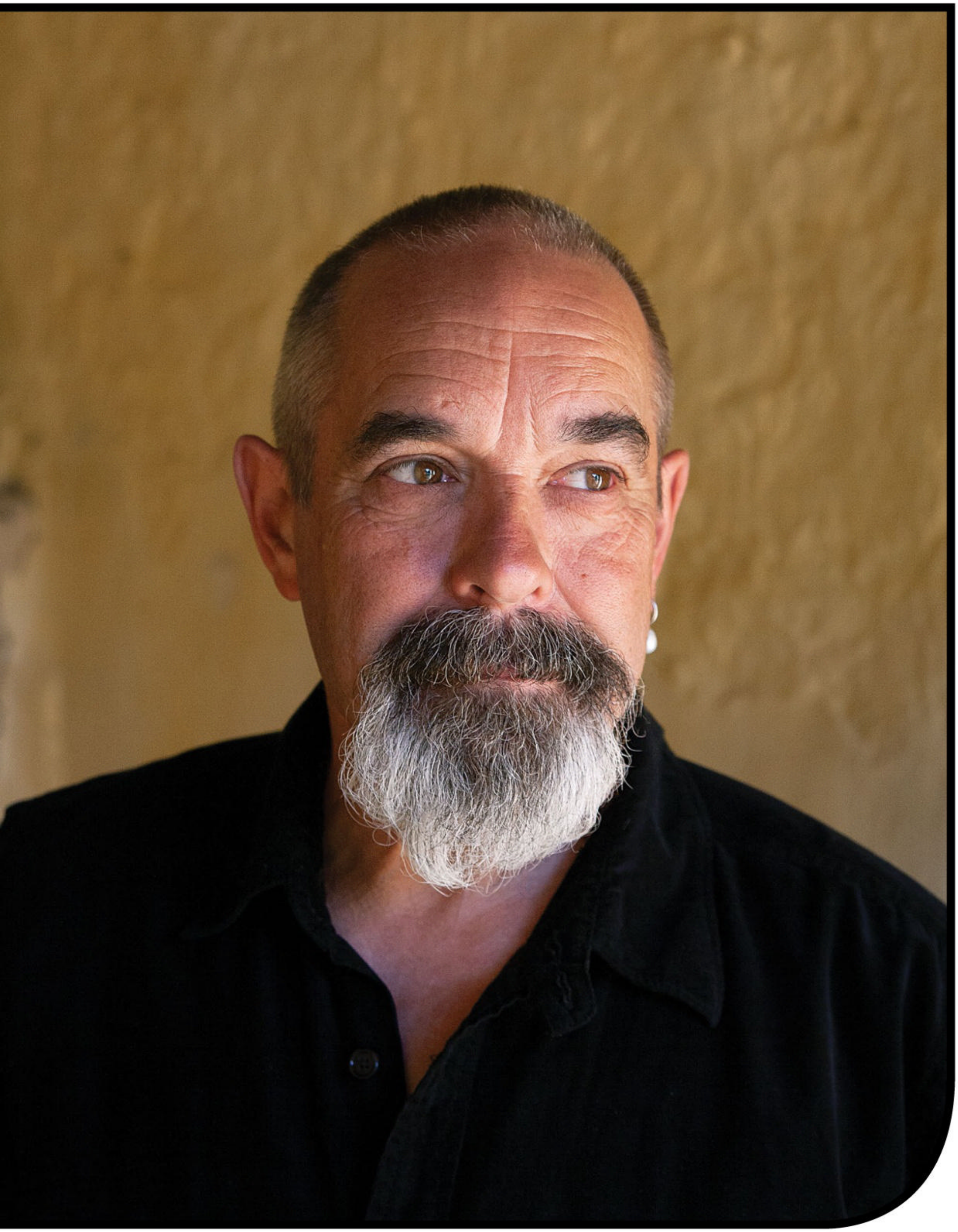
You've released some fascinating albums over the years, including *The Music Of Neglected English Composers*. What was the idea behind it?
I made up various names such as Ellishaw Blakehope, Morley Butterknowle, Pilham Aisby, Clare Brand, and so on and wrote in all sorts of different styles. One is deeply tragic because I wrote it just after my dad died and the music is really on the cusp of late romanticism, just before it went all weird and atonal.

You've also collaborated with a diverse range of musicians including an unusual album in 1999 with Peter Hammill. How did that come about?
Peter and I decided to make an album together. Because we were in different locations we arranged to play at 2pm in the key of D, I think it was. That's why we called it *The Appointed Hour* [laughs]. We played for an hour without hearing or knowing what the other was doing. I sent him the tape and he put what I did on top of what he'd done.

When you're writing do you wait for the inspiration to descend, or do you roll up your sleeves up and get on with it?
I try and work every morning. I get up and very often you're still dragging sleep with you. I improvise in my studio, which means that if something comes out of it I've got it on record, and if it doesn't that's fine as well. The piece called *Hope (The Kindness Of Strangers)* on the new record I wrote in 2020 to manuscript paper, without any musical instrument for reference. It was a glorious day and I was at the end of the garden naked, bearing in mind I live in the middle of town. I've got this little hidey-hole where people can't peek. Mind you, if they did they'd be so disappointed. [Laughs.]

What are you up to next?
I'll be touring to promote the new album and I'm also doing a kind of masterclass in the Italian city of Cremona, where Stradivari made his violins. It's for classical musicians who've got no idea how to play without musical notation in front of them. I want them to ask themselves: "What kind of music is the world telling me to make today?"

The Turning Year is out now via Deutsche Grammophon. See www.rogereno.com for more information.



IN MEMORY OF

GARY BROOKER

Procol Harum's singer-songwriter **Gary Brooker** MBE took the band from the British R&B scene to the burgeoning prog movement, and he quickly became one of the genre's pioneers. His distinctive voice added elegance to the band's unique blend of baroque pop and progressive rock, and his classical piano training made him a sought-after guest musician appearing with a wide variety of artists from George Harrison to Kate Bush. He died from cancer in February, at the age of 76, and we pay tribute to the rich musical legacy he leaves behind.

Words: Mike Barnes

Gary Brooker began his musical career in 1960 in the teenage Southend-based beat group The Paramounts. They released a number of singles on Parlophone and scored a Top 40 hit in 1964 with a cover of Leiber And Stoller's *Poison Ivy*. But by 1966 the musical landscape was changing fast, and the band felt they had done all they could by playing R&B covers.

The Paramounts were remodelled into Procol Harum in 1967 and Brooker started to develop his musical ideas. "Things seemed much freer," he said, "that you could do whatever you wanted, so I thought I'd become a songwriter, which I'd never done before. I got some ideas and thought, 'Oh, I can do this!'"

Brooker was classically trained — he had played piano since he was five years old — and listened to a lot of Handel and Bach. He was very taken by the Jacques Loussier Trio's jazz interpretation of Bach's *Air On A G String* and wrote his own fantasia on the composition.

The first that the public heard of Procol Harum was *A Whiter Shade Of Pale*, released as a single in March 1967. Brooker had met with lyricist Keith Reid and was inspired by his writing. They formed a songwriting partnership that endured for decades. (Following legal action, organist Matthew Fisher is also now credited as the song's co-writer.) They couldn't have dreamt of a more impressive calling card. At a time when an industry figure had told Brooker that pop songs should be no longer than two minutes and 47 seconds to be considered for airplay — that precise timing — the original version of the song rolled on for just over four minutes.

"What we were thinking in those days is that we didn't want to be those four smiling faces doing a two and a half minute song on [British pop show] *Thank Your Lucky Stars* or something," said Brooker. "We wanted to do music that went somewhere, that had possibilities and experimentation. *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* fitted into our idea at the time, which was to do something different, to not have boundaries."

Brooker had written a majestic melody and delivered a strong vocal performance with a weathered, grainy quality to his voice that made him sound older than his years. And the song's enduring mystery and inscrutability comes from Reid's lyrics, which form a stream of disorienting imagery complete with unfathomable allusions to Chaucer's *The Miller's Tale*.

And while many listeners pored over its meaning, *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* was the perfect pop soundtrack to 1967. It became a phenomenon, occupying No.1 in the UK for six weeks. Procol Harum, under pressure to do this again, scored another Top 10 hit with *Homburg*, but then carried on their more experimental and progressive approach; their 1968 album *Shine On Brightly* included a 17-minute suite *In Held 'Twas In I*, written by Brooker, Reid and Fisher

"It was a forward-thinking idea. Might I even say that it was 'progressive'," said Brooker. "Because the word existed but not [as] a pigeonhole that you could put bands into. We were trying to progress music and ideas. *In Held 'Twas In I*: you certainly couldn't call it pop, it would be hard to call it rock, but it fits somewhere. The only one pigeonhole that we ever fitted into is Procol Harum."

Pete Townshend told Brooker that it had influenced The Who's *Tommy*. It also greatly impressed Peter Hammill, who was initially a fan of The Paramounts, having rated *Poison Ivy* as one of the best versions of an American song by a British beat group.

"I've always felt [Procol Harum] never got their due," Hammill says. "They were first to do an extended long-form piece, *In Held 'Twas In I*. It opened the door to various possibilities — length of tune, succession of episodes, the use of non-repetitive themes. Also,

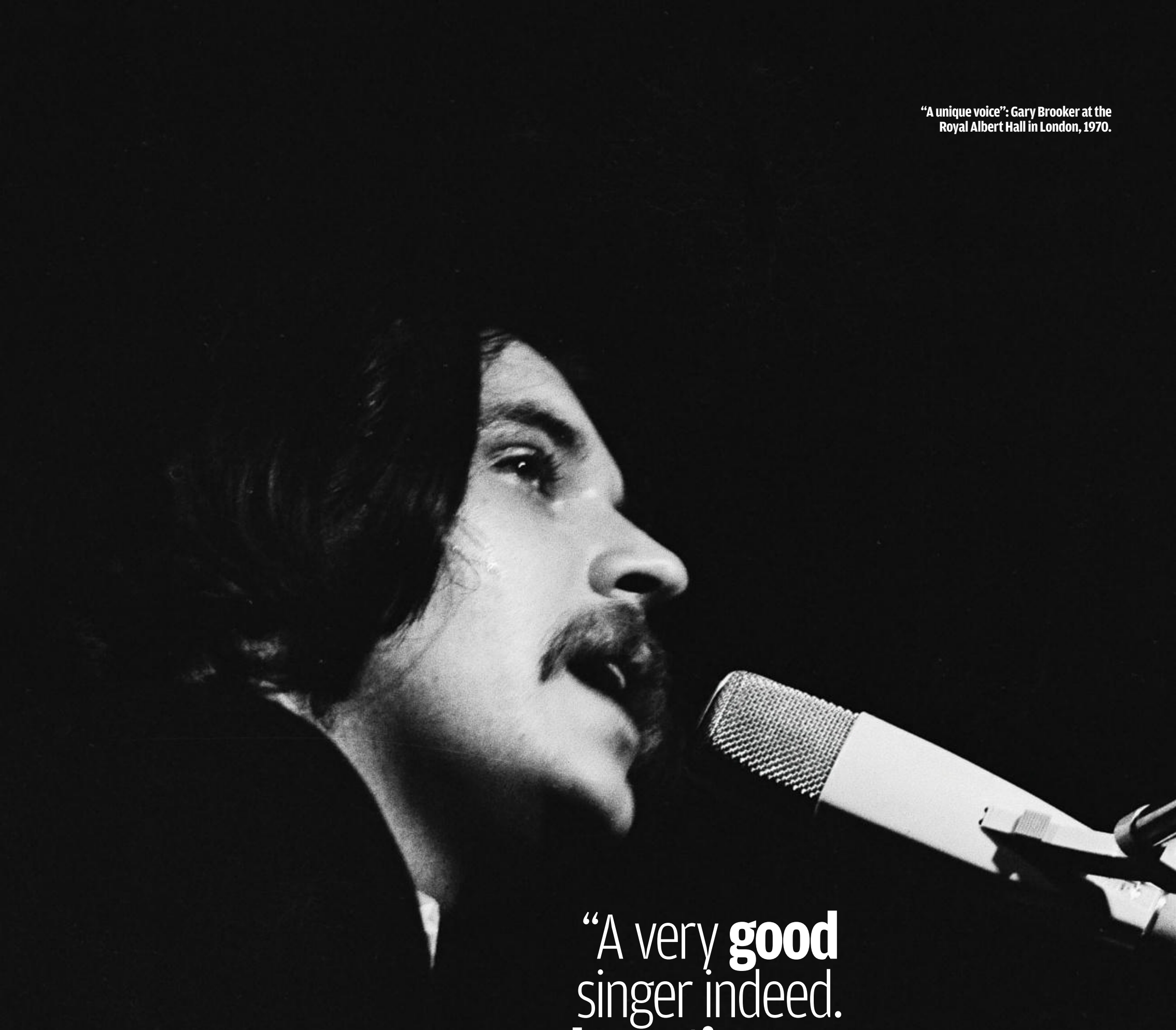
Procul Harum at the launch of their self-titled debut album.

PROCUL HARUM ARCHIVES

Making music without boundaries: Gary Brooker with a young Procol Harum.

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES



"A unique voice": Gary Brooker at the Royal Albert Hall in London, 1970.

"A very **good** singer indeed. A **haunting** sense of melancholy in his **voice**. Above that, though, he was a **great** writer."

Peter Hammill

Gary Brooker performs at a Bosnian Benefit concert with Annie Haslam, Roy Wood and Steve Howe at New York's Irving Plaza in November 1995.

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

importantly, and where it connects with my solo stuff and with Van der Graaf Generator, genuine passages of dread and menace."

Although Procol Harum never repeated their chart success or continued to write extravagant sidelong songs — and they were less instrumentally ostentatious than some of their progressive peers — they combined superior songwriting with adventurous arrangements.

One of Brooker's finest compositions and vocal performances is the title track of Procol Harum's 1969 album *A Salty Dog*. With its steady, tolling piano chords, it's like a darker, chillier cousin of Brian Wilson's songs about the sea. It had an epic sweep and marked the first time that Procol Harum had used an orchestra, with arrangements by Brooker. He proved himself particularly talented in this respect.

"A very good singer indeed," says Hammill about Brooker. "A haunting sense of melancholy in his voice. Above that, though, he was a great writer. My favourite song of all of Procol's oeuvres is *A Salty Dog*. A lovely, stately, haunting and entirely logical chord progression."

Procol Harum scoop Brightest Hope and Single Of The Year for *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* at the *Melody Maker* Pop Poll Awards in September 1967.

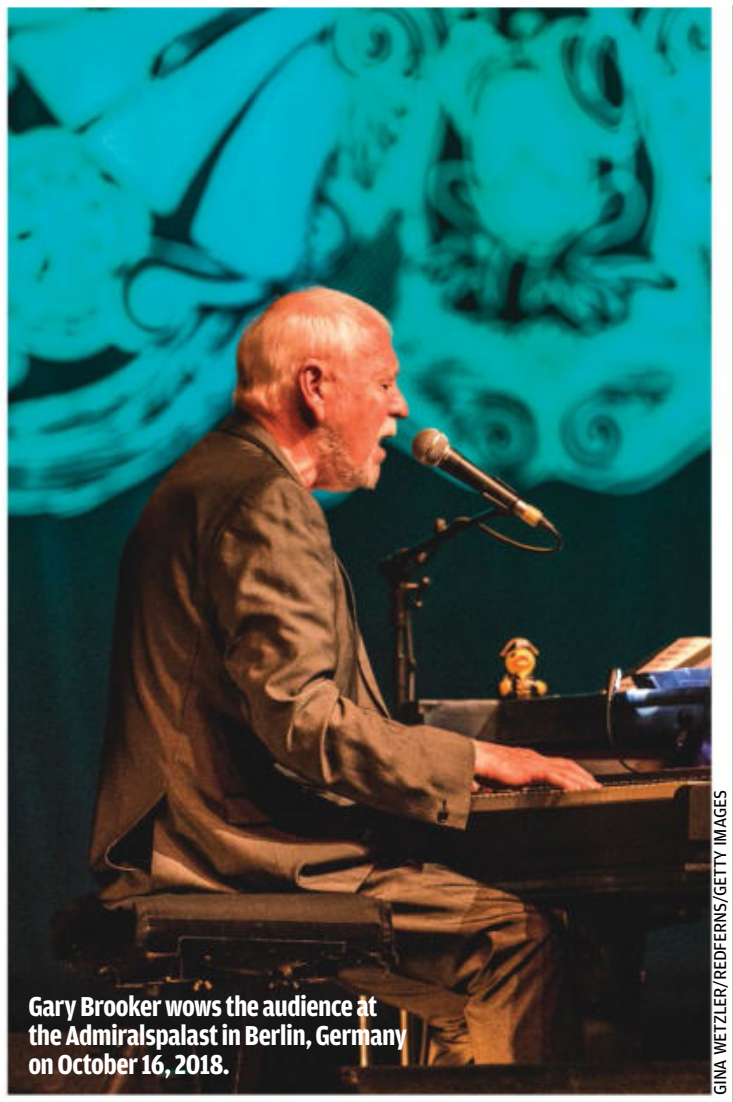
KOH HASEBE/SHINKO MUSIC/GETTY IMAGES

A caped Brooker performing *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* on TV.

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

“We wanted to do **music** that went somewhere, that had **possibilities** and **experimentation**.”

Gary Brooker



Gary Brooker wows the audience at the Admiralspalast in Berlin, Germany on October 16, 2018.

GINA WETZLER/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

WILLIE CHRISTIE/DGM ARCHIVES

Gary Brooker Remembered

The prog world pays tribute.

PROCOL HARUM
“He lit up any room he entered. A brightly shining irreplaceable light in the music industry.”

MIKE PORTNOY
“Very sad to wake up to the news of the passing of Procol Harum’s Gary Brooker. His voice and piano were such a distinct trademark for the band.”

COLIN BLUNSTONE
“So very sorry to hear the sad news about Gary Brooker. He was a wonderful artist and a great character. I will never forget seeing his wonderful performances many times over the years.”

STEVE HACKETT
“We’ve lost another national treasure. His music was groundbreaking.”

MARTIN BARRE
“I am devastated to hear of the passing of Gary Brooker. I have known him throughout my career, and the highlight for myself was to tour with him, and play amongst other songs *A Whiter Shade Of Pale*. He radiated charm and talent.”

BRIAN MAY
“Sad to lose a great musician, writer, singer and true gentleman. Procol Harum fans – like me – remember *A Salty Dog* as the pinnacle of his magic. A wonderful human being – will be sadly missed.”

GILES MARTIN
“Rest in peace Gary Brooker – incredible singer, writer and musician. More than that he was a lovely, lovely man.”

IAN PAICE
“A totally unique voice, totally recognisable as soon as you hear it. A wonderful, different style of music that he helped create with Procol Harum a long time ago. But when you hear those records today, they are so wonderfully perfect and so different.”

And while Procol Harum’s commercial success in the UK was relatively limited, the group took off in the US with 1972’s *Procol Harum Live: In Concert With The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra*. Brooker was increasing in confidence as an orchestrator. Sometimes a rock band playing live with an orchestra can clutter up the mid-range or sound a bit lumpy. Brooker’s view on this possibility was an emphatic: “I’ve always been aware that that might happen, so we’ve written it and organised it so that doesn’t happen.”

The orchestral tack carried on to *Grand Hotel* (1973) and thereafter Procol Harum concentrated on what they could do as a five-piece until their split in ’77.

Brooker might be most closely associated with progressive rock, but he grew up steeped in soul and rhythm and blues. This music was an influence on many 70s prog musicians, but is rarely mentioned in conjunction with the genre.

“Music, to me, is about conveying an emotion. It’s not conveying something that people can dance to — that’s not in our repertoire really — so it’s a matter of getting that across emotionally speaking,” he said. “And you get that from having grown up with Ray Charles and Little Richard and Sam Cooke.”

After Procol Harum’s split, Brooker embarked on a second career as a solo artist, recording a trio of studio solo albums. Back in 1970 he had guested on George Harrison’s *All Things Must Pass*, and as a singer and keyboard player he later made guest appearances on albums by artists including The Alan Parsons Project, Kate Bush, Wings and Ian McDonald. He also toured with Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr & His All-Star Band and Bill Wyman’s Rhythm Kings, as well as playing in pubs and clubs in rock’n’roll band No Stilleto Shoes with Andy Fairweather Low. He even had a cameo role as Juan Bramuglia in Alan Parker’s 1996 film, *Evita*. About these various sessions and side projects he said: “As far as high points go, it’s all been a high point.”

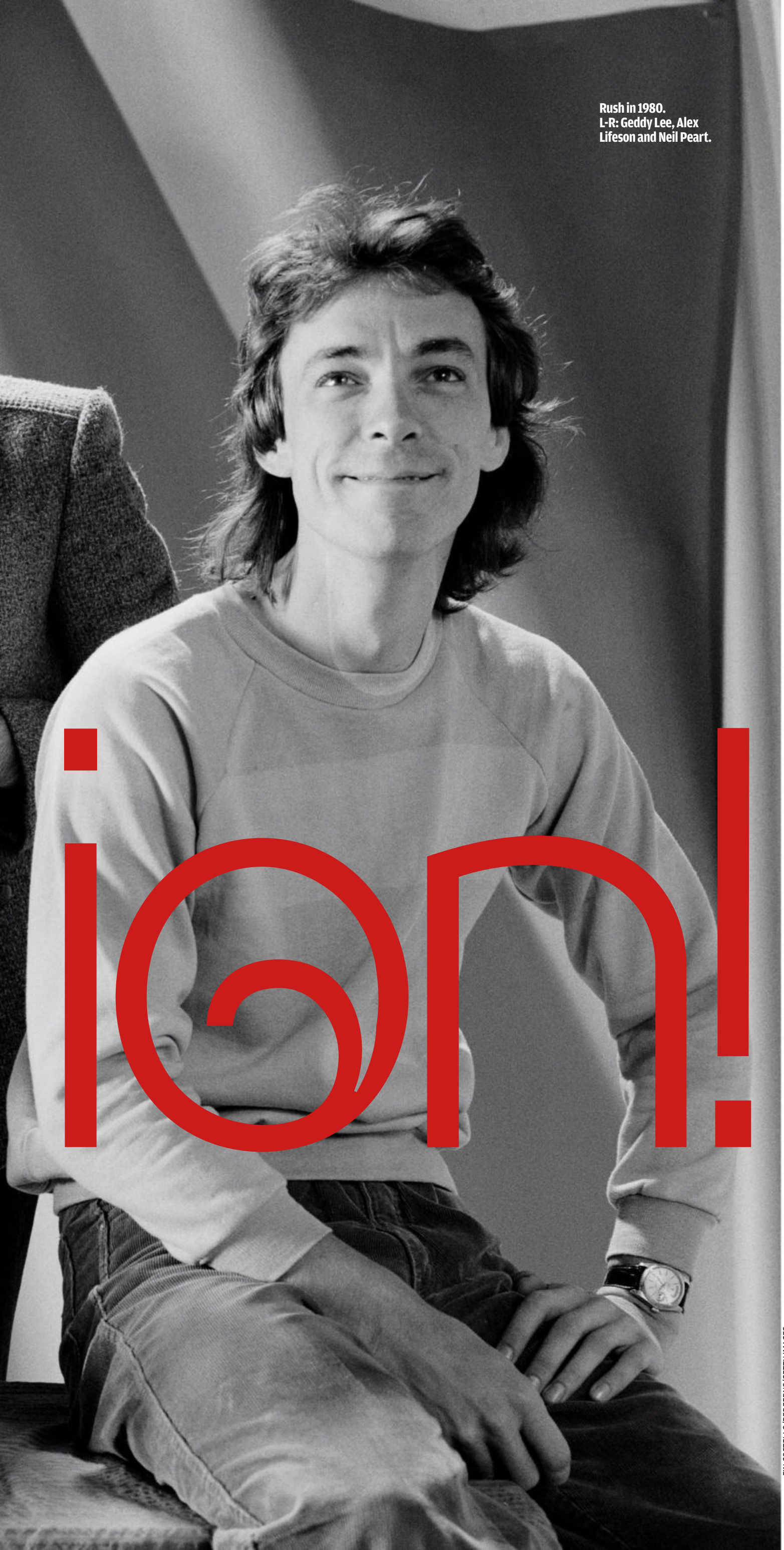
Procol Harum reformed in 1991 and produced their 10th studio album, *The Prodigal Stranger,* and in recent years toured extensively, playing with an orchestra when the opportunity arose. In 2003 Brooker was awarded the MBE for “charitable services”, and in his statement he said that he was “surprised and very proud”. His last charity project raised over a million pounds for the Royal Marsden Hospital with a concert at London’s O2 arena in early 2020.

When this writer spoke to Brooker in 2018 for a career-spanning interview in *Prog*, the songwriter was quick to point out that his career was not over yet. Procol Harum had released *Novum* in 2017, their first studio album for 14 years, comprising a strong set of which he was understandably proud. He was delighted to be playing some of the new material in the band’s live shows and was optimistic about the future, saying that he was singing better than he did 50 years ago and adding: “We’re still progressing.” But sadly it remains Gary Brooker’s last recorded statement.

Gary Brooker
May 29, 1945 — February 19, 2022

"*Moving Pictures* is the cute, sweet, happy offspring [of *Permanent Waves*]! We learned a lot about writing and how we work best to accomplish our goals."
Alex Lifeson

Take One: Act



Rush in 1980. L-R: Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart.

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

ion!

It was the album that was never supposed to be, and now **Rush**'s *Moving Pictures* has been given a 40th anniversary reissue. Geddy Lee and Alex Lifeson recall angry mobs, out-of-control aeroplanes and *Superman* in the story behind the hugely successful record that gave us *Tom Sawyer* and defined the sound of rock music in the early 80s.

Words: Philip Wilding
Extra interviews: Jo Kendall

It's quiet out here. Or it was. Canadian country singer Ronnie Hawkins' estate looks out on to Stoney Lake, a geographical idyll in Peterborough County in central Ontario. The surface of the lake is glassy and dark and so flat it looks like you could step out onto the water and walk to the furthest shore. The day's a liquid blue, the clouds like pale abstractions or opaque afterthoughts dotted towards the horizon.

The dark wooden barn sits back on the property, away from the main house with its bay window looking out towards the serrated edges of fir trees that sit jaggedly against the sky. The barn rattles and hums all hours of the day and sometimes night. The frenetic writing sessions taking place inside fizz and fade as the orange burns out of the August afternoons. Although the keening guitars, rumbling bass and impossible drum parts aren't the cause of consternation for the birds dotted among the woods this afternoon: it's the strange, relentless engine hum overhead, a darting blur of propellor blades and a small engine that sounds like it might choke, stutter and disappear out of sight at any moment.

"Oh," says Geddy Lee. "Alex [Lifeson] was in the heat of his 'model aeroplane period' at that point." He makes inverted commas in the air with both fingers, faux-exasperated eyebrows arching upwards. "Even Broon [producer Terry Brown] had the stupidest aeroplane you've ever seen in your life."

Lifeson: "I like to have a hobby when we're working."

Alex Lifeson is grinning like he's still got that model aeroplane tucked under one arm and is heading to a vantage point to send it into the sky.

"I had a radio-controlled plane that I built there and crashed into the top of a truck. Might have been Broon's

Geddy Lee: he has the wind in his hair...

DEBORAH SAMUEL

truck? Bang, right into the top of the cab, put a hole in the roof," he recalls. "But you should have seen the plane that Terry had. It was on these lines, and you flew it in circles, I guess. And the engine on it was probably 12,000 horsepower, and it went, like, 900 miles an hour. But in a circle."

Lee: "It was going around and around, getting faster and faster and Terry was holding on to it and getting dizzier and dizzier..."

Lifeson: "And he had to let go of it. He was going around and around, and I was laughing so much that I had to lay down in the grass. There were literally tears in my eyes."

Lee: "I was standing not too far from him. And when the thing took off, I had to hit the deck! This plane whizzing around overhead tethered to Broon – I mean, it had to come down eventually. He could barely stay upright. It was great. They were fun writing sessions, a good headspace."

Lifeson: "As long as you weren't being hit in the head, by, you know, Broon's or my plane..."

Welcome to the writing sessions for an album that would help define not only Rush, but also rock music in the early 80s: *Moving Pictures*.

> "[*Red Barchetta*] was one of those songs where it might have been built on a more conventional sense of timekeeping, and we would listen back to it and think, 'Well, that can be more interesting.'"
>
> **Geddy Lee**

It's early 2022 and Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee are sat in their respective homes in Toronto, the town where they both met as gawky kids with ambitions of being in a band. Lee is in his living room, Lifeson in his home studio, the wall behind him hung with guitars. Even on a Zoom call, the sparky energy that kept them as friends and bandmates for over 40 years is still self-evident. They are, at turns, reflective, forgetful, deeply focused or simply goofy when it comes to recalling the summer writing stints – and autumn and winter recording sessions – that led to them making a record that would help propel them to platinum rock star status, and go on to dominate their live set until the band finally retired in 2015.

It'll give readers some idea of the hectic writing, recording and touring schedule that the band were all undergoing at that point in their career that it was straight after they'd finished writing for *Moving Pictures* that they packed up their equipment, rescued Lifeson's plane from a tree and set out to play some shows before heading to Morin-Heights to begin making *Moving Pictures*.

If you were lucky enough to see Rush play those dates in September 1980 – 16 scant shows – you'd have seen the trio showcase two brand-new songs too: *Tom Sawyer* and *Limelight*.

"We played them live on those shows?" asks Lifeson. "Did we?"

"To warm them up," says Lee.

Lifeson: "Then how come *Tom Sawyer* was the hardest song to capture in the studio?"

Welcome to Le Studio. Now synonymous with the Rush name, they'd go on to record seven albums there, starting with *Permanent Waves* in 1980 and ending with 1993's *Counterparts*. Set on Lake Perry and in the foothills of the spectacular Laurentian Mountains, you can see why a band might be drawn there, as Lee puts it: "It was truly a part of the great Canadian landscape."

"A magical place," remembers Lifeson, "but practical too; you could drive home within five hours. And the house and the view... We had a volleyball court outside – it was right on the lake. We had barbecues in the summer. Every time we went there, we went back to what we liked to think of as 'our rooms'. It had that warm familiarity."

In the summer: barbecues, or setting out onto the lake in a paddle boat or canoe. In the winter: snowshoeing, or taking to your skis.

"And before Le Studio," says Lee, "you have to remember that we had been recording in Europe before we went there to make *Permanent Waves*, and all of a sudden, we're in this really beautiful studio room and it has these giant picture windows and this insane view. The lake, the mountains and you're banging away at *Freewill*, or whatever it might be. Le Studio was a revelation in the way we worked as a band; it was such a charming spot."

And they even had their own French chef on site.

18+

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages
Brand new content
One site

AVXLIVE.ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu

"That part of Quebec," says Lee with a smile, "is French and English, so you know… it's expected. And he was a very good chef."

Tonight, though, Le Studio is cold and dark, a place filled with foreboding. The lake is icy and the air frigid. The studio lights pick out the figures massed on the drive leading up to the main building, silhouettes wrapped in scarves and hats, their breath rising above them in hazy clouds. News of John Lennon's death that day has emanated from New York City. The band, who spent the autumn recording here, are back for overdubs and mixing, adding some elusive aural sparkle to the album. Sparkle that, for tonight at least, sees drummer Neil Peart rallying crew, studio staff and band members alike into what might pass for an angry mob as a precursor to the doomy intro for *Witch Hunt (Part III Of Fear)*.

> **"*Vital Signs* really kicked us off towards *Signals* without us even really knowing it."**
> **Geddy Lee**

"We put microphones on the driveway," says Lee, "and we got bundled up and went outside. We all started grunting and shouting stupid shit. We overdubbed over the top of ourselves over and over again until we created a vigilante mob. If you listen really carefully, you can hear some of the stupid things we said…"

"And the laughing, which was probably not what Neil was going for," Lifeson adds. "We took a bottle of Scotch with us as well, which might explain the laughter."

Lee: "A lot of laughter. It was good fun getting to do that."

Lifeson: "'Fucking football,' which I think you can still hear if you listen closely enough – that was my line, one of the many recurring highlights."

Though, as history bears out, that mob wasn't meant to be there that night. The band should have been home. There was no plan for an album called *Moving Pictures* and no new studio album in the pipeline after the surprise crossover success of *Permanent Waves*. The idea was another live album, another tour; maybe to think about the next studio record. But such was the band's momentum that they canned the idea of releasing a live album off the back of what had become their most successful tour and

"It was a great album to make"

Producer Terry Brown gives a view of *Moving Pictures* from the other side of the glass.

For some he's still *the* Rush producer – and Terry Brown was immortalised by the band in the live *Broon's Bane* from their *Exit… Stage Left* album. He was behind the glass handling co-production with the band from 1975's *Fly By Night* through to 1982's *Signals*. Here he recalls the months spent creating *Moving Pictures*.

The *Moving Pictures* Le Studio crew, L-R: Terry Brown, Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Paul Northfield.

RUSH ARCHIVES/YAEL BRANDEIS

What struck you first about the album demos – did they feel as strong as the material on *Permanent Waves*?
Rush were constantly evolving, so the demos were even better and the material had a more refined edge. It was more commercial fairy dust!

Was there any hesitation about returning to Le Studio to make the record?
We were so well looked-after at Le Studio while recording *Permanent Waves* that we couldn't wait to return for *Moving Pictures*. Between a great-sounding room, on-tap cappuccinos and the best French cuisine, it really was a no-brainer.

How long did it take from the demo stage through to the final mix?
The demo stage was spread over a few weeks, and bear in mind some of the tunes were road-tested on the previous tour. We loaded into the studio at Morin-Heights in autumn/early winter, well prepared, and spent about 10 weeks recording and mixing.

Weren't there some technical issues with the studio equipment this time around?
We did have some technical issues, but it's to be expected when you're pushing the latest gear to its limits. I mixed *Moving Pictures* to a digital format, which was ground-breaking, since the digital systems were unproven at that time. We used a Sony 1610 digital processor, which was hooked up to a three-quarter-inch video recorder. At times little glitches would appear on the playback, so we'd have to repeat the process.

Which songs started to properly reveal themselves in the studio first?
We started setting up on a cold Friday and by the time we had finished, Neil's kit sounded amazing. We were all set to record and cut the bed track for *Tom Sawyer* on the following day. If I'm not mistaken, we cut *Limelight* and *Red Barchetta* next.

And which were harder to capture?
If my memory serves me correctly, *The Camera Eye* and *Witch Hunt* were a little more difficult to nail down, in as much as they were moodier pieces and required different sensibilities. *Witch Hunt*, especially, was more of a studio production. This tune had many overdubs – not least of all the multitracked 'mob', at the beginning of the tune, who were recorded outside on the lawns overlooking the lake.

The band were evolving, even on from *Permanent Waves*. Did they bring anything into the studio that surprised you?
The band always surprised me to a certain degree – when they came into the studio for *Moving Pictures*, they were pushing themselves beyond their comfort zone. I think most noticeably on *YYZ*, which bounds with energy and finesse right out of the gate.

Overall, was this a happy album to work on?
Moving Pictures was a great album to make: the band was full of enthusiasm, the crew kept the gear humming and Le Studio was a very creative environment. I still love it; it stands up pretty well for a 40-year-old. **PW**

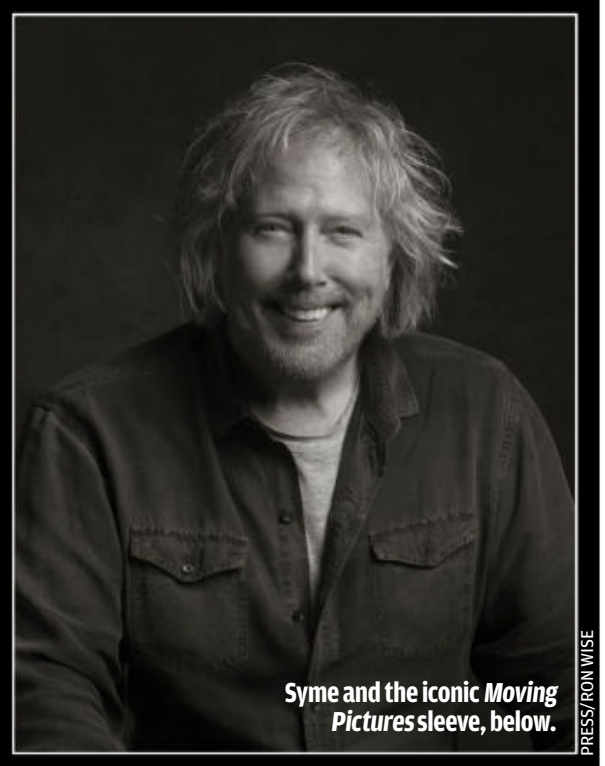
DEBORAH SAMUEL

Neil Peart's in the *Limelight*.

Re-Moving Pictures

Rush album cover artist Hugh Syme explains how he devised the concept for the cover of *Moving Pictures*.

From *2112*'s infamous starman, through floating brain hemispheres and a kid casually kicking a skull, Hugh Syme has always been on hand to bring Rush's musical fever dreams to life. Working for years in close conjunction with drummer Neil Peart, Syme's work became synonymous with the Canadian trio, latterly putting a new, reimagined spin on some of their classic albums.



Syme and the iconic *Moving Pictures* sleeve, below.

PRESS/RON WISE

When did you first hear the words '*Moving Pictures*'?
I remember exactly where I was: sitting in my friend Gail's home in St Catharines, Ontario, when Neil called me with the album's title. I also recall my *immediate* resolve on the cover's direction.

Which was?
Men in red coveralls actually *moving* pictures. The additional layers and triple entendres would follow.

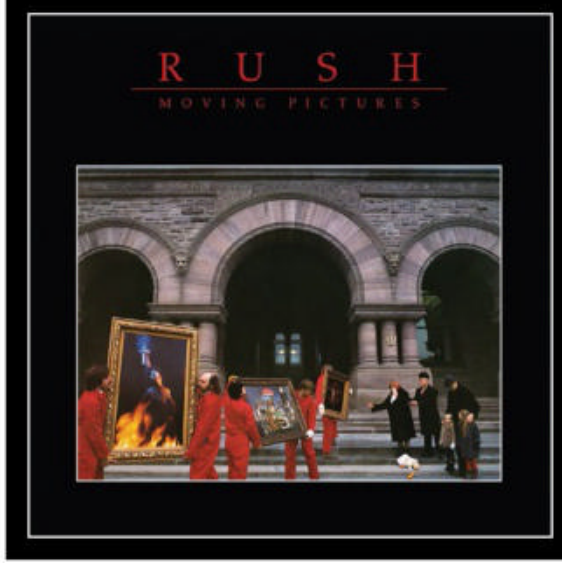
Did you spend much time at Le Studio as the band were working on the album?
Deborah Samuel and I went up to shoot photos of the band for the album. We stayed for about three days in the studio's guest house. We also sat for two hours in a paddleboat while Deborah shot Neil playing his red Tama kit on a raft in the middle of a nearby lake for a Tama ad. A private, and tireless, drum solo echoing off the surrounding Laurentian Mountains. That was a good day! Though the highlight on that trip to Morin-Heights was being asked by the band to play PPG synth on *Witch Hunt*.

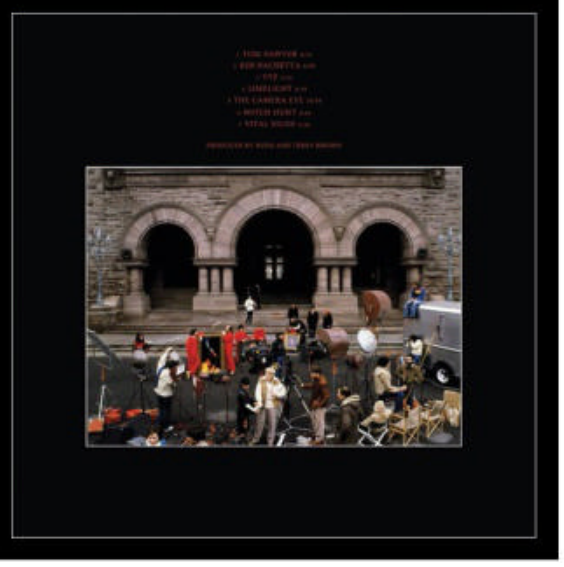
You finally settled on two concepts for the record: literally moving pictures and making movies. Was there ever a doubt which one would be the actual cover?
No, that order made sense to me. The three movers actively moving pictures on the front, then [on the back] they're taking a break, as we reveal a film set in an overview for context.

Who came up with the idea of using the government building as the backdrop?
I did. A happy and timely accident. I remember driving north on University Avenue in Toronto and was struck by the legislative building at Queen's Park, whose architecture featured three distinct arches, each supported by three pillars, and the three arched windows on the overhead mezzanine. You must remember that the concept of 'three' was emerging as a recurring motif for the band at the time and I thought, 'Well, it won't hurt to ask.' And to my delight there was no hesitation, permit or fee required. Simply that we shoot on a Sunday when parliament wasn't in session.

You've reimagined the cover and created new illustrations for some songs for the reissue. How was that?
For all the 40th anniversary box sets, happily. It's been a real delight every time, and a challenge to me personally to refamiliarise myself with Neil's lyrics, and to reflect the themes of each song with today's skill sets and mindset. It was a joy and privilege then – as it continues to be all these years later.

Is that really Neil in the middle of the shot on the back cover? Or is that a myth?
I love a good mystery, don't you? **PW**





RUSH ARCHIVES/YAEL BRANDEIS X 3

Surrounded by those beautiful views at Le Studio.

headed back into the Canadian countryside and to Le Studio.

"We were scheduled to do this big live album after *Permanent Waves*," says Lifeson. "And at the last minute we said, 'You know what? Fuck this, we're not going to do a live album. We're going to go back into the studio and do our *next* album.' And that's how *Moving Pictures* came to be. And it turned out to be the most important decision of our careers. Or the second most important decision, the first one being *2112*, because without *2112*, there would be no Rush."

"It was actually a friend of ours who worked for Mercury at the time, Cliff Burnstein," says Lee. "Cliff [who would go on to manage Metallica and Def Leppard as part of the Q Prime group] was responsible for getting us signed at Mercury. He was a huge fan of the first album. I remember we had played New York, and he came to the gig and we were talking about doing a live album. And he kind of said to us guys, 'You know, *Permanent Waves* was so great that maybe you should think about going straight back in the studio to do another record.'

"At the last minute we said, 'You know what? Fuck this, we're not going to do a live album. We're going to go back into the studio and do our next album.' And that's how *Moving Pictures* came to be."
Alex Lifeson

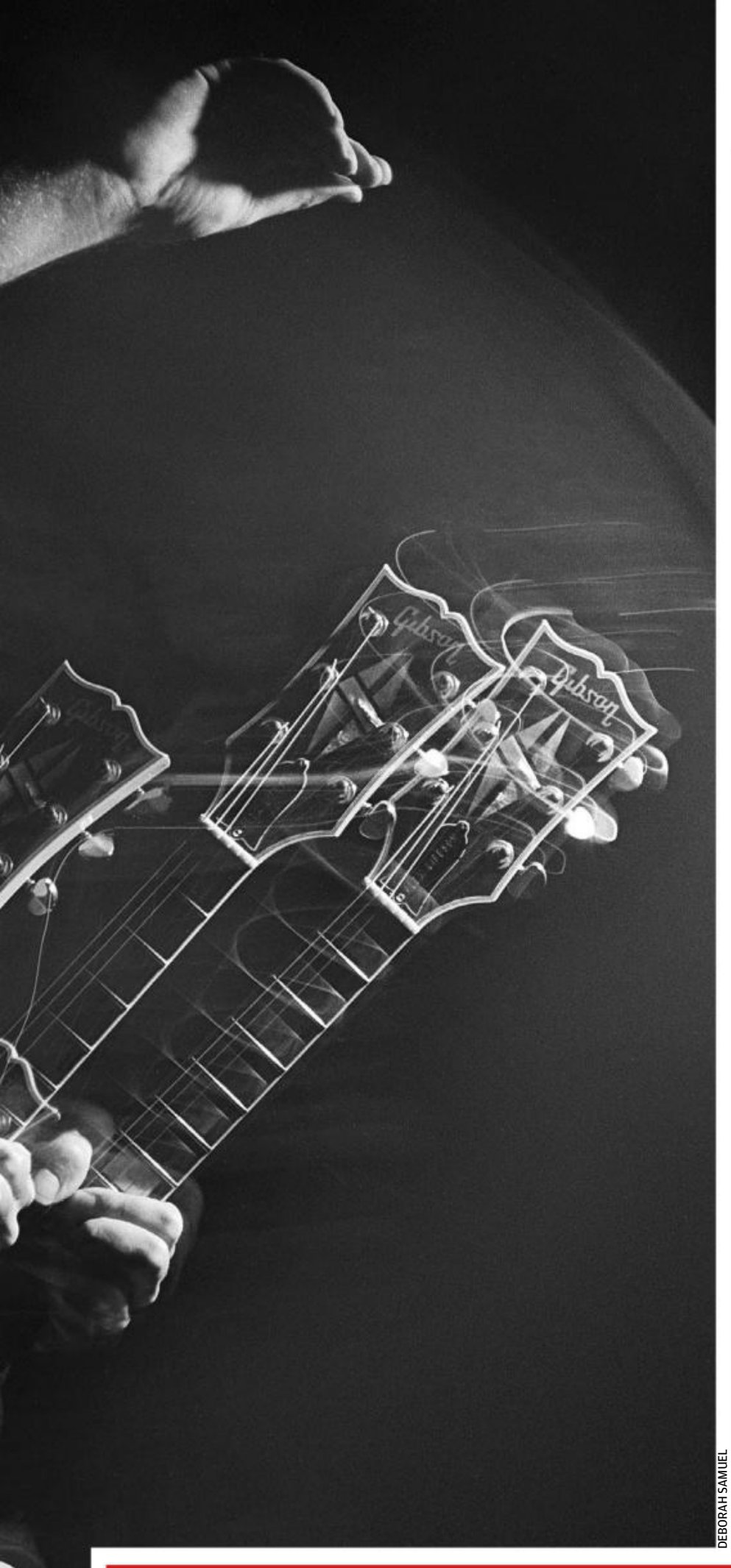
"So we talked about it and thought, 'That does sound more fun!' So that's what we did, but Cliff sort of planted the seed of us changing.

"And it was exciting to suddenly change plans. 'Okay, fuck it,' you know? 'We're going back in the studio!' And we were in a groove from *Permanent Waves*, we had kind of hit on a new style for ourselves; working in these shorter timeframes, but still building these complexities within those timeframes, and it was kind of an exciting period for us."

"If you think about it," says Lifeson, "*Moving Pictures* is the cute, sweet, happy offspring [of *Permanent Waves*]! We learned a lot about writing and how we work best to accomplish our goals so that an ambitious album such as *Moving Pictures* could be made without wanting to kill ourselves."

As LP Hartley once wrote, "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there." With that in mind, more than 40 years is a lot of miles travelled. Little wonder, then, that the occasional question about that period in history draws perplexed glances or queries from Lee and Lifeson. Like Alex forgetting that they had aired two songs from *Moving Pictures* live

Alex Lifeson gets into the swing of things.


DEBORAH SAMUEL

before they even got near the studio, something *Prog* only learned about quite accidentally during a chat with producer Terry Brown. Ask the band now about the sublime, and possibly most Rush-sounding song on the album, the expansive-sounding *The Camera Eye*, with lyrics inspired by American writer John Dos Passos (who's also said to have partly inspired *Grand Designs* and *The Big Money*), and the first thing Geddy can recall is the Christopher Reeve *Superman* movie.

"The thing I remember most about that song was playing around with the sound effects and overlaying movie soundtracks for the beginning and the ending," he says. "It was fun shaping that kind of soundscape. Because it begins with a streetscape, we used a bit of dialogue from the *Superman* movie. We'd been watching it, I guess, and there's a line that you can hear in the background that's right out of that movie. So I remember creating those moments, but I don't remember a hell of a lot about writing the song."

"[YYZ] is the worst thing you can imagine; a fucking song written by the rhythm section! I have to fit a guitar part over *this*?"
Alex Lifeson

"We were looking for moods," adds Lifeson. "I do remember that much – moods that might suit the wide-eyed perspective of the first half and build to a climax for each section. But it wasn't a conventional construction for a song by any means, and that's us saying that."

"I know how people perceive that album now," says Lee. "And it is a landmark record, but when you're writing a song, even those songs, you still vacillate between these moments of confidence and then moments of doubt. So, you waver between those two points until you hit something that you know works and excites you. But with *The Camera Eye*, because of the nature of the way the lyrics were on paper – it was more like prose – we approached it with the mindset of, 'What's the best way of explaining this?' It needed a different approach to, say, something like *Limelight*, which was a much more obvious beast: verse, chorus, verse, chorus.

"And that all bleeds into our decision to stop the concept album thing – that was a big deal. We started to look at writing as a series of individual concepts, a series of smaller movies, in a way, which is what led to *Moving Pictures* and certainly to a song like *The Camera Eye*."

For a lot of listeners, one of the highlights of *Moving Pictures* is the consistency of Neil Peart's lyrics around that period. From *Permanent Waves* onwards we saw a distillation of Peart's words; he was more concise, less broad strokes, and in a song like *Limelight* at his most revealing.

"I remember his writing in that period was very concise," says Lee. "And although there always was a little bit of back and forth about one line or another, I don't recall any major surgery or lyric changes around that time. As things progressed in our relationship, as singer to lyricist, that eventually changed, and I became more of a sounding board for him."

Cover Act

Kelly Jay was the frontman of Canadian rock band Crowbar (not to be confused with the US sludge metallers of the same name). Before his death in 2019, he told *Prog* about his appearance on the original cover of *Moving Pictures*.

"I knew Geddy and the boys; we travelled in the same circles. We were [former Canadian PM] Pierre Trudeau's favourite band and we had a large following, but not as big as Rush. We'd bump into each other, but the main connection was photographer Deborah Samuel, who I – and my wife at the time, Kerry Knickle – knew. She asked me to come and be one of the guys involved in the shoot. I didn't know that much about Rush's music. We were like Mozart and they were like Wagner [laughs]. They had a lot of notes!

"It was filmed in front of the Ontario Legislature. It was a Sunday and the place was closed, nobody except us in the parking lot. We were there for quite a while. My wife was the makeup lady – you'll see her on the inside cover.

"Deborah is a phenomenal photographer and an amazing director, and the idea for the sleeve was superb: the totalitarian Russian gulag carrying the paintings around. My wife and I did a lot of fashion photography back then because my other work with her was making feather hats. So it was just another fashion shoot!

"We didn't get paid but we did favours back and forth for each other. Afterwards, Crowbar carried on as a band, we had a lot of nice accolades and our song *Oh, What A Feeling* seems to have become a classic. I've written 500 songs since then.

"I've got a copy, but I have never heard the record. It's a cool piece of art and the amazing thing about it all is that it leads people to check out why did they do it, who was involved, and you discover a lot stuff – however, you're the first person to want to speak with me! Up until now, nobody knew that I was on that sleeve. It used to be one of the great bar bets: who's that on the *Moving Pictures* cover? The mystery seems to have lived on." **JK**

He's been framed! Kelly Jay.
DEBORAH SAMUEL

Sometimes we would rearrange things, but I think for the most part in *Moving Pictures*, what he wrote was pretty much how we built the song. There was no major surgery going on. It was just our job to make a soundtrack for each one, to create these vignettes."

Hold the moment. It's a hazy afternoon up at Stoney Lake, a warm enough summer afternoon that the barn doors are open to let the daylight in. Neil's off in some far corner of the estate, pen poised over his notebook, scratching away at some lyric ideas. Inside the barn there's the familiar buzz of guitars and the low boom of Geddy's bass riffing around a song, trying to find a way in.

"What was that?" asks Lee suddenly, looking up at Alex like a dog who's just spotted a hare.

"Huh?" says Lifeson, who is already playing something else, willing his guitar to take him on to some*where* else.

Geddy, with the patience of a father who's told his son to turn the music in his bedroom down one too many times, holds up a hand to pause proceedings and walks over to the tape machine spooling and whirring silently in the corner, a constant in these frenetic writing sessions. The tape plays back and there, in the mash of arrangements and notes, is a diamond in the dirt: the opening riff to *Limelight*, intact, polished and bright. It was as if it had just fallen out of the sky and into their laps.

"It was pretty much like that, yeah," admits Lifeson with the kind of shrug that suggests he stumbles upon $50 bills each time he leaves the house.

"So I go wind the tape again," says Lee with a theatrical sigh. "And there's the opening to *Limelight*. And that's exactly why the tape was always on. Because before, if we used the tape and it wasn't rolling, Al would play some amazing thing and I would say, 'Holy shit, that was so great! Can you play it again?' And he'd go, 'Huh? No...'"

Lifeson: "I was already on to the next thing or the next version of whatever it was, that's my problem. I just sort of impulsively play that way and it just keeps moving forward."

He isn't kidding. *Prog* once sat up very, very late on the balcony of a gilded hotel in Beverly Hills with Lifeson during the mix of *The Clockwork Angels* album, and as we made our way industriously through the mini bar and the sweet scent of smoke wreathed around us into the purple Californian night, Lifeson played his acoustic guitar mellifluously. Beautiful notes and arrangements went pealing away, intermingling with the wisps of West Coast dope someone had handed him earlier. There were three or four distinct moments when *Prog* stopped to ask what he was playing; not that he had any idea, he was just playing. We could have used a tape machine that night.

"Now I think about it, it's just the same with my guitar solos," says Lifeson. "The first five takes were always the best ones for the material. And then after that, I would just start repeating myself and I wouldn't get the right vibe up, and then it would get to the point where I couldn't objectively think of those pieces and put it together. And that's when I get kicked out of the studio. Then these guys and the producer – whoever – would take the solos and they'd start snipping it all up and going through a bunch of permutations until they got the one solo they needed, and then I come back in. First of all, I'd go, 'That's amazing! I played that?' And the second thing I'd say is, 'Fuck me, I'm gonna have to play that live!'"

> **"The tape was always on. Because before, if we used the tape and it wasn't rolling, Al would play some amazing thing and I would say, 'Holy shit, that was so great! Can you play it again?' And he'd go, 'Huh? No...'"**
> **Geddy Lee**

Correct us if we're wrong, but it sounds like the bass player wrote *Red Barchetta*. The question makes Lifeson cackle and Lee shoot *Prog* a look like he's just found us stuck to his shoe.

"I think you'll find that Al and I both wrote that song," he says. "I clearly remember writing the middle section: I remember writing that part on acoustic guitar. And then the whole '*wind in my hair*' part, that whole section, but I think the main chordal pattern was Lerxst [Alex], and I just had room around that arpeggiated section where I could noodle. It gave me a lot of latitude. That's why it sounds like the bass player wrote it."

RUSH ARCHIVES/FIN COSTELLO

Lifeson: "I got to play the harmonics in a steady pattern that gave it a little bit of stability, while Ged and Neil were playing around with those accents, going off beat. We did that a lot over the years, where they would sort of go off and become the lead instruments and I would lay back and try to anchor it with an acoustic or with harmonics. *Red Barchetta* had that."

Lee: "It was one of those songs where it might have been built on a more

conventional sense of timekeeping, and we would listen back to it and think, 'Well, that can be more interesting. Yeah, why don't we start messing around with the time and that's how it begins?' And then Pratt [Neil] and I go off on this tangent and instead of landing on the beat, we can wait and land on the back of the beat. So, it was all in aid of being unpredictable."

"Naturally, being Rush, we took it too far," says Lifeson. "Years later, so then it pushes the other two choruses. That could be a mess live."

Rush happily turned their backs on a live album to record *Moving Pictures* instead.

It's late when Lifeson gets back to the barn one night, driving the five hours up from Toronto. Inside, Lee and Peart are beaming. They've written a new song they think might work for the album. Would Lerxst like to hear it?

"I stood there — hadn't even been in the city that long," remembers Lifeson. "And it's the worst thing you can imagine: a fucking song written by the rhythm section! I have to fit a guitar part over *this*?"

His comic incredulity is fitting. Does he remember *his* reaction the first time he heard the jumble of riffs and pacing that was *YYZ*?

Lee: "Pratt and I had gone into the barn and we just started jamming to loosen up. I got this idea for that main riff, and so we just went back and forth. Then, before we knew it, we were putting a song together. Pratt would say, 'Hey, it would be great if we had a part that was a bit more mellow now.' And I'd say, 'Well, I can use keyboards here.' And then, almost out of nowhere, we had this song."

"Then I had to learn that stupid bass part and transpose it to guitar. *Thank you*?" Lifeson says, laughing.

"One of the really cool things about that song, though, is that we were on a break and had gone home, and a friend of mine flew up to pick us up in a small plane. We were flying back to the city and, approaching the airport, they have this identifier, and it's Morse code. It's that *'dada, dada, dada'* signal that would be the intro to the song. I don't know — was it you, Ged, or was it Neil? But somebody said, 'Hey, that'd be a cool way to start the song: with that rhythm, the identifier.' And then, when we went back to the studio, we fit it in. And that's such a signature."

For a lot of people, the introduction to Rush's biggest-selling record came with the deep, sonorous hum of the bass pedal that brought *Tom Sawyer* kicking into life. *Prog* has stood in Madison Square Garden as that self-same pedal opened the show and watched grown men wilt, bloom and throw beer over each other, simultaneously utterly in thrall to the booming opening chord and what it might bring. *Tom Sawyer* has become legion to Rush fans and never out of a live show since its inception on that first album tour. Naturally, this being Rush, it almost never made the album.

"I mean, when we were working on *Tom Sawyer*, actually for the longest time, it was the worst song on the record," Lee reveals.

"We had more trouble with that song than almost any other song. I had real doubt about whether the song was

RUSH ARCHIVES/YAEL BRANDEIS

A man of many notes: Lifeson during a wistful moment at Le Studio.

working at all. I remember when we came to do the solo, and we're having a lot of trouble getting a sound that you were happy with. All of a sudden, [album engineer] Paul Northfield kind of jumped into action and came up with this idea of miking the stereo speakers and doing your solo in a stereo spread. Then it gave it that kind of tubular sound. And then it finally came to life.

"But when we finished and were even mixing the song, and we'd had problems with the computer that was running the mix, so we all had our hands on different parts of the console operating it manually because we didn't trust the fucking thing. We'd do a take and everybody was holding onto their section of the console. But even then, I remember having doubts about that song. Then when we heard it back in full, it was like, 'Holy *fuck!*' when those bass pedals came in. It was like, 'Okay, this works.' But up until that point, there was a lot of doubt about that song."

And it was *Tom Sawyer* where he first laid down his infamous Rickenbacker bass and picked up the Fender Jazz. That was pretty much heresy to a lot of Rush fans.

"Yeah, I just couldn't get the bass sound to work on that song. It was just weird, because I use the Rick on pretty much every other song on the record, but it wasn't working on *Tom Sawyer* whatever we tried. There was a lot of fiddling and I think it created a negative association towards *Tom Sawyer*, but not when it was finished. It genuinely felt like a whole other song."

Lifeson: "It went from being this immovable thing to the obvious candidate to open the record – that opening and then Neil's drums. But I do remember it being a real relief to tick off the chalkboard."

Lee: "We always had a chalkboard. We'd put the songs up and the parts left to record and would check them off as we worked."

Lifeson: "Rupert Hine [producer on *Presto* and *Roll The Bones*] had a different kind of process where he used coloured Post-It notes for each of the jobs. The drums were maybe yellow, the vocals were maybe red. The guitar was maybe blue or green. And he would stick them all on the screen, on the window between the studio and control room. And as you finish the job, you took that one off until the window was clear. You could literally watch the progress of the album."

"When we were working on *Tom Sawyer*, actually for the longest time, it was the worst song on the record."
Geddy Lee

Lee is quietly astounded. "I have a photo of that, and I could not remember what the notes were for! Yeah, like a musical advent calendar leading up to the finished album."

Lifeson: "Did you tell him about *MacGyver*?"

Lee: "I didn't. You tell him about *MacGyver*."

For all their po-faced legacy, this is what it's like to sit in a room with Lifeson and Lee as they toss dry bon mots back and forth with faces set like they're playing a hand of poker.

"It was also used as the theme song for the Portuguese version of [TV spy show] *MacGyver* in Brazil."

Lee: "That's right."

Tom Sawyer?

Lifeson: "*Tom Sawyer*, yeah. We went to Brazil and we couldn't figure out how the fuck we got so popular there. And it turns out that they had overdubbed the original music for the TV show and had changed it to *Tom Sawyer*. And so everybody wanted to hear that song, because everybody knew it from fucking *MacGyver*!"

From the arduous journey that was *Tom Sawyer* – not only the album's opener but one of the first songs to be written for the record – we now go to the last, the sprightly sounding *Vital Signs*. Conceived and created as if on a whim in Le Studio, its energy sparking off around the room, the giant picture windows picking out the lake below.

"It was the last song we wrote on the record, and we wrote it in the studio. It was a very spontaneous moment, a really nice thing," says Lee. "After labouring the songs for a few months,

just to go in as the three of us and see if we can just write a song, that's a thing. We did the same thing again with *New World Man*, it was written like that. Certain albums have that one spontaneous song. And it's funny because that song, those types of songs, end up being a precursor for some styles that we might do on the next record. Like a segue, almost. So, *Vital Signs* really kicked us off towards *Signals* without us even knowing it."

It's the summer of 1981, the first set of acclaimed *Moving Pictures* shows are done, and the band are back at Le Studio for yet another mix. But no hats and scarves or baying mobs this time: they're here to work on the live mix of *Exit... Stage Left*, the album that was originally meant to follow *Permanent Waves*. The atmosphere is electric, the sun is high and so is the band's mood.

Lee: "That was a really fun summer. We had the barbecues, we were out on the lake and because we had tonnes of time on our hands, because it was a live album mix, we didn't have to be in the studio until we had to listen to it. And Le Studio being Le Studio, it was during those mixing sessions that we wrote *Subdivisions*. We were bored, we had a keyboard handy, and then we went back out in the autumn to promote *Moving Pictures* and *Exit...* That was a good time in our lives."

It's getting late; Lifeson has to go and meet family, Lee's got another meeting he has to take. One more memory before we go from the final mixdown of the record and as the band were trying to push the album home. The weather's picked up, it's December 1980 and there's a blizzard coming in over the mountains on the lake at Le Studio. There's trouble inside the studio, too.

Lee: "We were having some weird issues with the electronics of the place because they had just gotten their new SSL board there. It was a bit buggy. It was one of the first SSL boards in the country and it was freaking out a little bit. I remember when we were mixing *Tom Sawyer*, *Vital Signs* and *Limelight*, we were having all kinds of crazy problems because there were these electronic spikes. They were actually changing the mix at the very last minute and we genuinely thought we were going bonkers, that we'd been in the studio too long, until they figured out what it was."

Lifeson: "It was a grounding issue."

Lee: "When we'd arrived it wasn't super-cold. But by the time we left it was the dead of winter and there's all kinds of moisture in the ground and a lot of snow. It shifted the atmosphere and so it was shorting out the desk. You'd see these spikes on the computer screen; you'd see each track had shifted when you hadn't programmed them to move. You don't want that when you're mixing because you're already crazy enough by that point!

"I remember leaving Le Studio that night and I had to get back to the city as I was meant to be heading off on holiday with my family, and by the time we left Morin-Heights this huge snowstorm had hit. I had Broon with me and I was in my old Porsche trying to negotiate these roads in this half-light with the snow just ricocheting off my windscreen. That's sort of my enduring memory of the end of those sessions and that album: just trying to make it home."

And now?

"I mean, it's funny because those two records, *Permanent Waves* and *Moving Pictures*, are always connected for me. Yeah. Because one spurred the other in so many ways. They were both really a culmination of all the trial and error that had gone on a lot of the records before it. And after *Exit... Stage Left*, it was time for something else. It was a more turbulent process from then on in, because there were these other layers in our music, other textures, and the records became much more difficult to make over the next seven years.

"I guess what I'm trying to say is that after *Moving Pictures*, I don't think we were ever the same band again."

Moving Pictures — 40th Anniversary Edition is out now via UMC. See www.rush.com for more information.

The Camera Eye

In an interview from 2013, photographer Deborah Samuel explains how she came to work with Hugh Syme and even ended up on the cover of *Moving Pictures!*

"I was living in Toronto at the time and I was shooting entertainment and doing fashion as well. Hugh Syme asked me if I'd be involved on *Permanent Waves* to style the girl on the cover, which I did. It was before Photoshop so we had to put four negatives together in the dark room. So we had to print it all on one piece of paper – an adventure in itself! Hugh put himself on the cover: he's the guy who's standing next to the stop sign, waving.

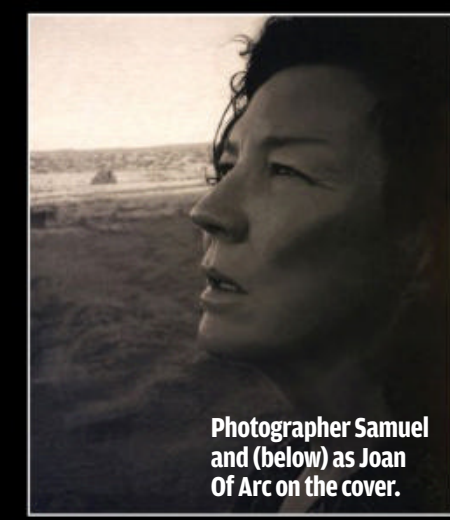
"Hugh then asked me to shoot the cover for *Moving Pictures* and as he had been on the cover of *Permanent Waves*, it meant that *I* went on that. I became Joan Of Arc and it became a joke between Hugh and I. Hugh and Neil Peart had brainstormed the pictures they wanted and it became a pun on pictures that moved people. The Coolidge picture of *Dogs Playing Poker* was a favourite of Neil's – he had a good sense of humour.

"On the day, the pictures had been blown up to enormous sizes and framed so the movers were moving real pictures. It went really smoothly – we had a big truck with everything in and so many hours to shoot it. We brought in a number of friends to participate and set it up to create the scene.

"The Joan Of Arc setup was done shortly before; we got an old pole and put it up in the studio. I got into burlap and stood in front of the pole. I had a shutter release cable in the back of my pants and we set up a pie plate under the lens and put lighter fuel into that. Hugh set it on fire and the perspective made the flames look huge, like a bonfire – they were just three inches big.

"On the day it was fun; we were all 30 years younger and happy: 'I'm going to be on a Rush cover!' Everyone was related, or a friend. The band were not there [though]. I didn't know them terribly well, but I did their shots with a Monobloc, a piece of equipment that takes four shots a second. That was another pun on 'moving pictures'.

"I did a lot of album covers at that time, it's how I started in the business. But it's always rewarding to see the complete work. I never thought much of being Joan Of Arc, but it's become much more of a story in the last 10 or so years than it was at the beginning. I've gotten more fan and interview requests, probably because of the anniversary [Time Machine] tour in 2011, and it became huge! It's kinda odd. It's certainly a role that I understand and when I was a kid she was an important figure to me, I never knew why. It's kind of an early feminism, and being burnt for your beliefs... in my line of work that's something you've gotta take on!



Photographer Samuel and (below) as Joan Of Arc on the cover.

"I worked for over 20 years in editorial portraiture, fashion, entertainment; I travelled at lot and lived in different places. Nearly 20 years ago I moved into fine art. I always had that alongside commercial work. I was one of the photographers who always got the wildest jobs as I can deal with people [laughs]. My fine art work became more important.

"I haven't listened to the record recently. I have pretty eclectic tastes in music but I appreciate Rush; they were one of the nicest bands to work with, down-to-earth and professional. All the really good people are always like that. They've weathered all storms, and working with young bands in LA, they don't get that.

"I think the sleeve is a classic. The concept weathers time, the music weathers time and the artwork weathers time. There's a lot of admiration for it. I get a lot of emails and enquiries and it's a record that defines a certain part of your life. A lot of young men are particularly influenced. It was part of the culture, make-up and voice." **JK**

DEBORAH SAMUEL

"It sounds weird, but when I sang it I felt like I was going somewhere else."

Renaissance's Annie Haslam connects with the playful spirit of *Scheherazade*.

PRESS/RENAISSANCE ARCHIVES

Arabian Nights

When it was released in 1975, *Scheherazade And Other Stories* divided critics with its sprawling title track and concept. As **Renaissance**'s unusual sixth album heads towards its 50th anniversary, it's been lovingly remastered, expanded and reissued via Esoteric. Longstanding vocalist Annie Haslam recalls the story of its inspired creation.

Words: Mike Barnes

In 1974, Alan 'Fluff' Freeman, the DJ who had been more readily associated with the Sunday tea-time chart rundown on Radio 1, showed his true prog colours on his Saturday afternoon show. He played blasts of Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* to herald a track by "the very royal ELP", and then championed Camel's *The Snow Goose*, Manfred Mann's Earth Band's 10-minute version of Bob Dylan's *Father Of Night, Father Of Day* from *Solar Fire*, and another mini-epic: *Mother Russia* by Renaissance, from their album *A Turn Of The Cards* that had been released that May.

The song, written by guitarist Michael Dunford and lyricist Betty Thatcher, was based on Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novel *One Day In The Life Of Ivan Denisovich*. As the group's singer Annie Haslam says, with that sort of subject matter "it's going to be a big song", and the drama was accentuated by keyboard player John Tout quoting *The Bells Of Moscow* by Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Such was the ambitious mood of the time that Dunford then began working on a stage musical based on the story of Scheherazade collated in *One Thousand And One Nights*. In it, a cuckolded sultan is so convinced of the infidelity of women that he weds a new virgin every day and, to ensure they never betray him, has them executed the following morning. When it's Scheherazade's turn, she tells him a story every night but leaves it unfinished, which so intrigues and beguiles the sultan that ultimately he spares her. On the 1,001st night, when she tells him she has no more stories, he marries her.

This series of folk tales, which includes *The Seven Voyages Of Sinbad The Sailor* and *Ali Baba And The 40 Thieves*, is thought to date back to eighth-century Persia. The work was first published in English in the early 18th century as *Arabian Nights* and was widely translated, inspiring a symphonic suite by Rimsky-Korsakov, and an overture and song cycle by Ravel. And of course, the 1975 album by Renaissance, titled *Scheherazade And Other Stories*. "It's the three Rs," quips Haslam, "Rimsky-Korsakov, Ravel and Renaissance."

But was it a conscious move by the band to try to trump *A Turn Of The Cards*?

"It wasn't planned," she replies. "Mickey [Dunford] had come up with this idea for a musical and he had only got so far, but the music was phenomenal. Then Betty wrote the words and it went through quite a few stages of rewriting. I wasn't a writer of music but I gave vocal ideas and ideas for arrangements. Mickey particularly, and Betty, wrote for my voice; it was all tailor-made for me."

But Haslam recalls that, although she was classically trained, she needed cajoling to tackle parts of what turned out to be a 24-minute composition.

"I was living in St John's Wood and Mickey came round with a little cassette player and played his guitar," she recalls. "He would say, 'This is where you are going to sing' and would give me Betty's words. It eventually became easy, but there were parts when I said, [whining] 'I can't do that!' But he was like, 'Pull yourself together, you'll get used to it.' And I did. I've got five octaves, but I didn't look at myself in that way, because it was so different from what anyone else was doing. There's nothing like it now, really."

Renaissance rehearsed the album in one of two converted barns in the grounds of Beel House in Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, that had once been the home of Dirk Bogarde; Jethro Tull were in the other. Haslam was completely taken by the composition.

"And you'll never guess what Roy Wood said next..." Renaissance have a laugh in New York, May 1976. L-R: Michael Dunford, Annie Haslam, Terry Sullivan, John Tout, Jon Camp.

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Annie Haslam onstage in Amsterdam, Netherlands in 1974.

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS)/GETTY IMAGES

"It sounds weird, but when I sang it I felt like I was going somewhere else," she says. Haslam, who's also a visual artist, explains that before she starts painting she feels a sense of connectedness with the work, and that she had the same feeling with *Scheherazade*. "I said to Mickey: 'I don't think you quite realise how much you touch people with this music, but it goes deep. It fills you up completely.'"

Renaissance's *Scheherazade And Other Stories* was released in July 1975. It was recorded at Abbey Road and orchestrated by Tony Cox, who had worked with Spirogyra, Trees and Mike Heron, and on the recording he conducts the London Symphony Orchestra and a choir. The results are more fluid and nimble than many examples of orchestrated rock. Drummer Terry Sullivan plays in a subtle style, Dunford plays acoustic guitar and Tout generally plays piano. There's more brio than bombast, and they avoid the potential problems of the mid-range frequencies of electric guitars and keyboards muddying up the sound of the orchestra, particularly strings.

Tout had enjoyed including classical quotations in Renaissance material, and on *Scheherazade* he slips in a few bars of *The Sea And Sinbad's Ship* from Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite. But although it might have been a general inspiration, it's the only appearance of material from that composition.

Another quote on the album is Dmitri Shostakovich's four-note musical signature, DSCH (in German, Es translates to E-flat and H to B), which crops up on the 11-minute *Trip To The Fair*. It sets the tone for an uncanny evocation of a deserted fairground. Tout's twinkling keyboards play circular passages that sound like creepy calliopes and there is a disquieting echoed laugh. "When we were recording the song, I got to certain parts and started laughing because I got it wrong," Haslam explains. "I did it three times but the laugh was in a different place. So when we played it back we decided to keep them."

In fact, Betty Thatcher's lyrics were based on a specific romantic episode that took place in Easter 1975. When Renaissance had a few days off, Dick Plant, the engineer at De Lane Lea studios where they had recorded *Turn Of The Cards*, called Annie Haslam.

"He said: 'Why don't you come down to the studio? Roy Wood is going to be here and

Still going strong: the current incarnation of Renaissance in concert.

PRESS/RENAISSANCE ARCHIVES

I think you two are going to hit it off.' I thought, 'Hmmm... green hair'. So I went down and it was love at first sight. His sense of humour was the first thing, but he was a handsome man underneath all that hair."

Wood asked her to dinner at Trader Vic's in the Hilton on Park Lane, and they went there with Plant and his wife. "I lived in Hampstead at the time and I said: 'There is a fair at Hampstead Heath, let's go up there.' We drove up and when we got there it was as dead as a doornail. It was dark — spooky, actually.

"Betty had said, 'Call me up after your date, I want to know what happened'. So I did and she came up with *Trip To The Fair*. She did that with a few songs. *Ocean Gypsy*, also on the album, was about me and [the band's manager] Miles Copeland. He was my boyfriend for two years from 1972."

Another strong melodic song, with a haunting instrumental section featuring piano, orchestra and choir, *Ocean Gypsy* became a live favourite, but without Haslam realising that she was singing about herself. "I never thought about it and she didn't tell me about it until years later," she says. The only song on the album that she's not so keen on is the brief *The Vultures Fly High*. "Maybe because of what it's about," she says. "We got some terrible press in England. At one point they said we were pompous and blah, blah, just because we were different. Betty wrote that about the press — they circle over us all."

This attitude of the UK music press partly explains why Renaissance concentrated their activities in the US and mainland Europe. Just before *Scheherazade And Other Stories* was released in the US, the band played three sold-out shows at Carnegie Hall in New York City in June 1975, with Cox conducting the New York Philharmonic and a choir. Haslam explains that their popularity over there was due in part to radio exposure.

> "It was so different from what anyone else was doing. There's nothing like it now, really."

"Two DJs really helped the band, and they were the same with Yes and Genesis: Ed Sciaky who was on WMMR in Philadelphia, and Alison Steele who was on WNEW in New York," she says. "They played us all the time and there was an amazing demand from promoters, so that's why we concentrated our time in [North] America rather than England."

Recordings were made of the shows with The Rolling Stones' mobile studio, which were released as the double album *Live At Carnegie Hall* in 1976. How did *Song Of Scheherazade* go down in concert? The live version was a full 28 minutes long and no one would have heard it before.

"I think people were floored by it, and the version of *Ashes Are Burning*, from the same show, was one of the best that we ever did," says Haslam. "It was brilliant and you've got all the energy of the audience. It was amazing to have a choir as well."

Song Of Scheherazade climaxes with some spectacular singing from Haslam.

"When I sang ...*Scheherazade* onstage it was so emotional," she recalls. "I love the piece so much — we all did, you could feel we were all gelling onstage. My voice just soars and when that high note at the end came you could feel everyone in the audience go, 'ahhhh!'"

It must have been a costly venture playing live with a world-class orchestra. Is it true that there was much more money in the music business back then?

"Yes, but you've still got to pay it back," she replies. "You don't get a royalty cheque for God knows how long afterwards."

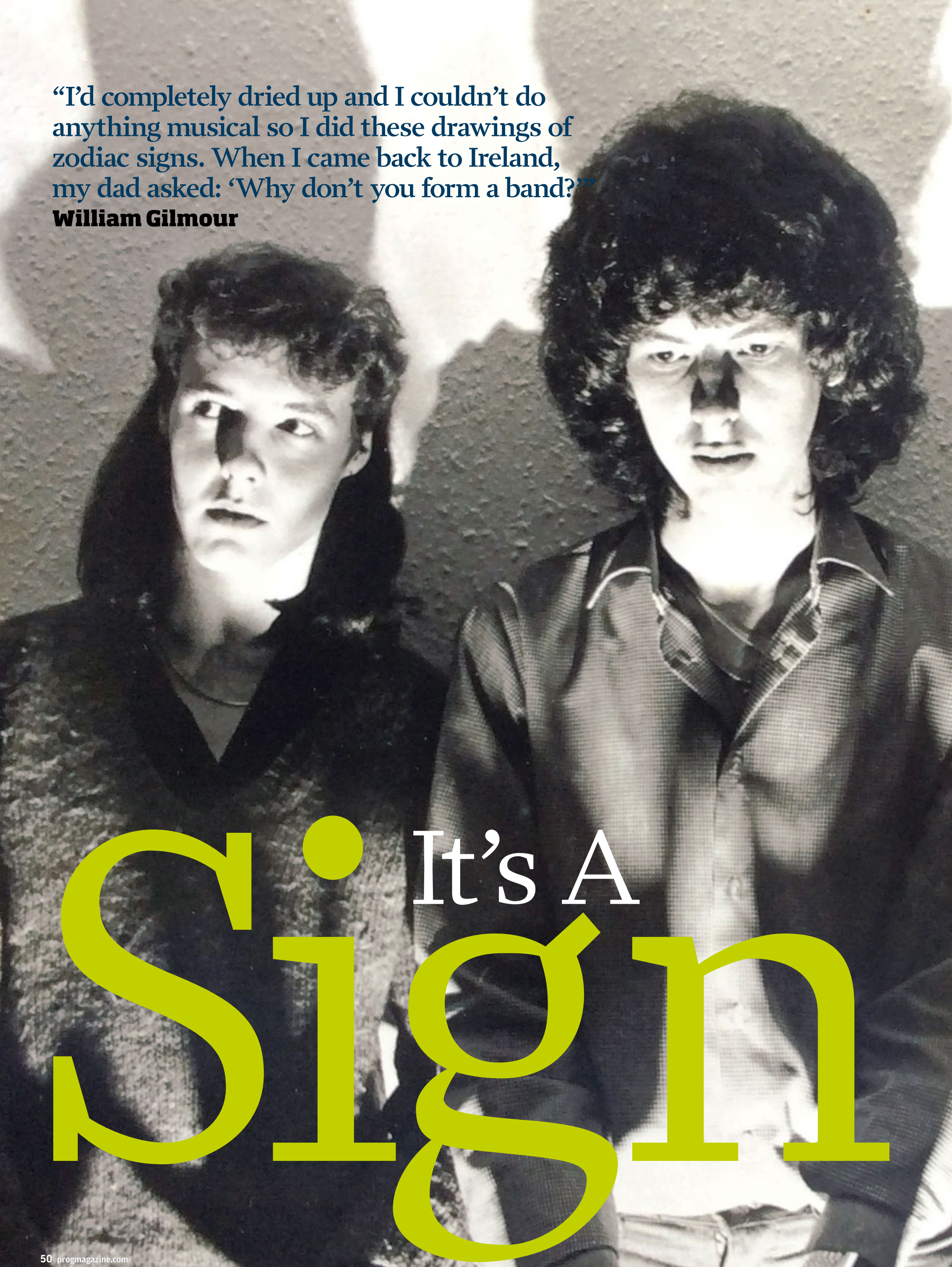
Back in the land of vultures, Renaissance were playing smaller venues. The recent reissue of *Scheherazade And Other Stories* includes a live recording from January 1976 at Nottingham University. Did this feel like a come down after playing at Carnegie Hall with the orchestra?

"I don't think it really bothered us because when you're a musician you just want to play," Haslam replies. "I understand what you're saying but we would just go on with it and it sounded great. I am amazed that we could ever do ...*Scheherazade* live with only four musicians. But Jon Camp was a brilliant bass player and he did a lot with his foot pedals. John Tout had three keyboards and I sang some of the flute parts."

Scheherazade And Other Stories remains very highly regarded and some reckon it's one of the most important progressive rock albums of the 1970s. How highly does Haslam rate it?

"It's difficult to say, because the albums are all so different," she says after a thoughtful pause. "I think *A Song For All Seasons* is a masterpiece as well. Mikael Åkerfeldt, the singer with Opeth, is one of our biggest fans and particularly likes that album. *Turn Of The Cards* is also way up there. But I think that musically *Scheherazade*... is the one."

The remastered and expanded edition of Scheherazade And Other Stories is out now via Esoteric. See www.renaissancetouring.com for more information.



"I'd completely dried up and I couldn't do anything musical so I did these drawings of zodiac signs. When I came back to Ireland, my dad asked: 'Why don't you form a band?'"
William Gilmour

It's A Sign

In the early 80s, keyboard players William Gilmour and Martin Russell left The Enid to form **Craft**. Despite the promise of good things following the release of their self-titled album in '84, the band disappeared almost as quickly as they appeared. Five decades on, the long out-of-print *Craft* has been expanded and reissued as *First Signs [Definitive Edition]*, and *Prog* catches up with the pair to find out more.

Words: Jerry Ewing

CRAFT/PRESS

Stargazers: Craft back in the day and (right) their reissued debut.

"I do wish I'd kept as much hair as Martin…" Former Enid keyboard player William Gilmour smiles wistfully from *Prog*'s computer screen and motions towards a thinning scalp, before breaking into a chuckle. Alongside him on screen is fellow former Enid keyboardist and bassist Martin Russell who, at 65 years old, sports a luxuriant thatch that would be the envy of a man half his age, let alone the 69-year-old Gilmour.

It's been a while since either man faced the music press, but neither seem particularly phased. The ebullient Russell talks and talks. And then talks some more. The more mild-manned Gilmour patiently awaits his turn, and then carefully chooses his words. Despite their paths not crossing for many years, a kind of yin and yang is evident between them that suggests they'd make a good creative pairing.

The reason we convene today is the release of an album by a band called Craft. Not the Mexican prog rockers by the same name, nor the Swedish black metal band who formed in the 90s. Our Craft appeared in the early 1980s, at the height of the UK prog revival, featured the two ex-Enid members, along with drummer Grant Mackay Gilmour, and released their self-titled debut in '84 containing six instrumentals named after signs of the zodiac. This writer recalls buying it at the time and excitedly awaiting big things. It never happened.

"It was 38 years ago that it came out," smiles Gilmour, who had joined The Enid in 1977 and departed in 1980. "I left because I didn't like the band's directional change. We had finished *Six Pieces*, which was an enormous album to do, it really was complex. And then Robert started getting in singers like Malcolm Le Maistre [who sang on 1980 single *Fool*]. They started becoming more vocal. It didn't have the same impact for me and I was disillusioned, it looked to me that it would be a vocal band instead of a truly instrumental band."

"That's what had attracted me," agreed Russell. "At the time my favourite two bands were UK and The Enid. When I joined The Enid, I felt like I'd been picked for England. It was amazing. The ambition of a band that can write something like *Albion Fair* or things that reference Bruckner's symphonies, and quoted possibly too often from Rachmaninoff and what have you. That was right up my street.

"We did two albums for Pye, which Willie was on: *Touch Me* and *Six Pieces*. And then after that, for whatever reason, Pye didn't want anything more to do with it. We were pretty much running the band's studio, which was pretty rare in those days to have a home studio. But we did, at some point, spend an album advance on a decent tape machine and a mixer. So that became a means of survival. And we started to take on a number of clients. One of the notable things that came out of that was the first Kim Wilde album [1981's *Kim Wilde*] with *Kids In America*.

"While we were trying to find another record deal, it

Now and (below) as they were then. L-R: Martin Russell (keyboards)...

...William Gilmour (keyboards).

...Grant Mackay Gilmour (drums).

CRAFT/PRESS

began to feel to me that there were no depths to which we wouldn't stoop. We did a version of *When You Wish Upon A Star,* which had an original track on the B-side called *Jessica*, and it was lovely. This was for Bronze Records. But recording the vocals was awful. It was like having Noel Coward but not as good, but obviously the thinkers over at Bronze went: 'Okay, Disney kind of works, what else can we do like that?' And the next thing that you know, we're doing bloody *Heigh Ho* [released as a single in 1981]. That was not the band I had joined or signed up for."

Russell followed Gilmour out of The Enid in '84, little knowing his former colleague had retreated to southern Ireland and that music was the furthest thing from his mind.

"I'd completely dried up," Gilmour declares. "This was 1981 and I couldn't do anything musical so I did these drawings of zodiac signs, which took me eight months up in an attic to do. When I came back to Ireland, my dad asked: 'Why don't you form a band?' The only person I could go to was Martin. He had written the most amazing thing in The Enid I had ever heard — that was the arrangement of *Once She Was* [from 1980's *Six Pieces*]. The most beautiful thing I think I've ever heard. Wonderful brass sounds. The arrangement was really quite spectacular.

"So it was a matter of getting in contact with Martin and taking a bag of drawings and saying: 'Hey, do you fancy starting a band?' I think my dad gave us £2,500, which was quite a lot then. And my dad's brother, my uncle Connor, gave me another couple thousand. We bought the keyboards to write the music. And then when we recorded them, we started selling some of the keyboards off to pay for some of the studio time. So we ended up with no keyboards but an album which really was brilliant. I was very proud of it. It all looked very good at the time."

Craft was released in 1984 through the Shanghai label. Musically, its six tracks — *Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo* and *Virgo* — packed a weightier punch than The Enid, but that band's sense of symphonic grandeur hangs heavy over these tracks as well.

"The ambition of a band that can write something like *Albion Fair* or things that reference Bruckner's symphonies... That was right up my street."
Martin Russell

"The reviews were largely positive," says Russell. "We got a little review in *Sounds* and from all over Europe. Local BBC radio, and even a pre-*The Word* Terry Christian. He didn't get it and made no bones about saying so."

What Craft didn't do, however, was play live. With no internet to help spread the word back in the 80s, interest swiftly waned. "We didn't get a chance, really," muses Gilmour. "It all got very hectic towards the end. We were quite young and possibly fairly innocent."

Even as the band began slipping into obscurity, the rumour mill suggested that a follow-up would feature the remaining six signs of the zodiac not included in the debut. All true, according to Gilmour.

"We were working on it," he nods. "We had a quarter-inch tape recorder, I think it was a four-track. It's got some really lovely stuff. I think Martin's got some of that stuff on the new album. That was most interesting. We were coming up with some lovely, lovely ideas. But then it dispersed because of finance."

Save for a CD release in 1991 on Kinetic, for which Russell remixed the original album, that might have been the end of the Craft story. Russell drifted into production and engineering work, and since 1996 has been a core member of the worldbeat collective Afro Celt Sound System. Gilmour has immersed himself largely in the teaching of music, in Shetland and then mainland Scotland, and was commissioned by the Highland High Arts to write an oratorio ("I think I spent a year and a half working on it. An enormous piece. Three movements. And I put the orchestra together," he says with pride), as well as keeping his hand in with fellow former The Enid guitarist Francis Lickerish in his Secret Green project. Meanwhile, the absent Grant Mackay Gilmour continued drumming in Pride Of Passion, who once featured a youthful Steven Wilson on keyboards, and various jazz bands before he too moved into teaching.

However, enter the fray Explore Rights Management Ltd, who discovered the 1991 CD version of *Craft* on YouTube and got in touch. And thanks to whom we now have the nicely expanded *First Signs [Definitive Edition]* CD, which features eight bonus tracks, four of which are remixes from the original album along with two unreleased pieces — *Despina* and *Dmitri's Lament* — as well as artwork by Gilmour and new liner notes from Russell.

"It was over half my life ago and I feel like it's almost looking into the mind of a different person," Russell exclaims. "But the benefits of it were reconnecting with Willie and Grant, and the affirmation of having it available this century. It's on Spotify, it's on Amazon Music. People can hear it for free without having to buy the album. And that's huge."

First Signs [Definitive Edition] is out now via Explore Rights Management Ltd via Cherry Red.

THE BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY

A CURE CAN'T WAIT

EVERY 46 MINUTES

SOMEONE IS DIAGNOSED WITH A

BRAIN TUMOUR.

Work with us to accelerate a cure

Brain tumours affect more than 11,000 people every year and survival rates are among the lowest of all cancers. We need your support to help us get closer to defeating brain tumours.

Text DEFEAT5 to 70507 to donate £5, please help us to fi nd a cure.

thebraintumourcharity.org

© The Brain Tumour Charity 2020. Registered Charity in England and Wales (1150054) and Scotland (SC045081)

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

OLD DOGS & NEW TRICKS

L-R: Alex Lifeson, Alfio Annibalini, Andy Curran, Maiah Wynne.

One of this year's biggest surprises has been the announcement of Alex Lifeson's new synthrock project **Envy Of None**. With their self-titled debut album out now, the Rush guitarist, along with bassist Andy Curran and up-and-coming vocalist Maiah Wynne, tell *Prog* all about its inception and the very special tribute to Neil Peart that closes their first chapter.

Words: James McNair **Images:** Richard Sibbald

The way Envy Of None's bassist Andy Curran tells it, the "humble origins" of the band owe something to a romantic little ditty titled *Liquor & Whores*. A 2017 single by Bubbles & The Shit Rockers, this country and western spoof delighted fans of Canadian TV sitcom *The Trailer Park Boys*, wherein actor Mike Smith plays Bubbles, a geeky, bespectacled Belgian who also happens to be a devotee of Canuck prog giants, Rush.

Liquor & Whores included *Trailer Park Boys* fan Alex Lifeson on guitar, and when he and Bubbles asked Curran to play bass on the song, it marked Curran and Lifeson's first musical union. Best known for his early 80s work with Canadian hard rockers Coney Hatch, Curran had known Lifeson for yonks and been his labelmate at Anthem Records, but *Liquor & Whores* broke the ice for more serious pursuits. In 2021, when Lifeson released the instrumentals *Kabul Blues* and *Spy House* via his website, Curran was honoured to play bass on the first original music wholly credited to a member of Rush since their drummer Neil Peart's tragic death to cancer in January 2020. "I was like, 'Oh, maybe this is crossing over into something…'" he recalls.

Happily, Curran's instincts proved to be correct. Both *Kabul Blues* and *Spy House* have since been reinvented as songs on the self-titled debut by

“I DON’T NEED MY EGO FED AND I DON’T WANT TO BE THE BIG SHOT. THIS IS VERY MUCH A BAND AND I JUST WANTED TO BE A GOOD CONTRIBUTOR TO GREAT MUSIC.”

Alex Lifeson

Envy Of None, a new electronica and industrial rock-influenced band that features 25-year-old vocalist Maiah Wynne and second guitarist/multi-instrumentalist Alfio Annibalini alongside Lifeson, Curran, and session drummers David Steinberg and Tim Oxford.

Lifeson is the big name, of course, but he certainly doesn’t want star billing. “I don’t need my ego fed and I don’t want to be the big shot,” he tells *Prog* from his Toronto home studio. “This is very much a band and I just wanted to be a good contributor to great music. Working with such strong ideas people and able performers as these guys, it was easy. You’ll hear something different in these songs

every time. I do, and I must have listened to them 17 million times."

As befits his status as an axe god, the backdrop of Lifeson's Zoom call comprises a wall of vintage guitars. Mindful of grave world events, he has tucked short blue and yellow jack leads into the neck of his T-shirt, "in honour of our Ukrainian brotherhood". Curran also tunes in from Toronto, while their American bandmate Maiah Wynne joins us from her studio space in Portland, Oregon, her red beanie hat pulled snug, and a cello and an acoustic guitar visible behind her. *Prog* mentions that it must be nice for Lifeson and Curran to have some youthful energy in the band. "Yeah, they're siphoning it off," quips Wynne. "Stealing my blood!"

It's Wynne's malleable, breathy voice that lends a real commercial edge to Envy Of None songs such as propulsive opener *Never Said I Love You* and the richly textured ballad *Old Strings*, but elsewhere, listeners may hear shades of Aimee Mann guesting on Rush's *Time Stand Still*, Nine Inch Nails, or Shirley Manson fronting Garbage. There are prog and gothic elements to the music too, making Envy Of None difficult to pigeonhole.

"Yeah, Alex and I had talked about stepping outside of our comfort zones in terms of what we might be expected to do," explains Curran of the album's layered sonics. "I've always loved 80s new wave and 90s alternative stuff, and if you listen to something like [Lifeson's 1996 solo album] *Victor*, Alex was writing that way even back then."

Wynne, a Colorado-born singer-songwriter who has released a number of EPs under her own name, comes from a folk and indie background, so Envy Of None has been a real departure for her, too. "I've written music for independent films and explored industrial stuff and heavier music through that," she says, "but this is definitely more trippy, gritty and dark than what I would usually write."

Going back a few years, Curran, Wynne and Curran's former mixing engineer Alfio Annibalini had already begun working together before Lifeson committed to the project fully.

"In a very serendipitous moment, I was asked to be a judge for an online music competition," explains Curran. "Maiah was one of maybe 10 different artists whose music I had to rate. I loved what she did, and next thing I know I'm on a Zoom call with her as a mentor.

"She explained that the gentleman she had been writing with had moved away, so I told her she had to network. Without missing a beat she said, 'Well, how about I do some songwriting with you?'"

The project evolved slowly via file-sharing, with Curran sending

In tune: Envy Of None.

Wynne "a bunch of ideas" and a few lyric fragments, and suggesting that she developed the ones she liked best. "It was very collaborative and a lot of fun trying to find the puzzle piece that fit with certain parameters or keywords," she says. The first thing Curran and Wynne "really connected on" was *Shadow*, the kind of dark-side-of-the-psyche trip at which EON excel. '*What do I do with all these thoughts?/ I'm breaking down in the middle of it all*', sings Wynne.

Lifeson's involvement was initially more tentative, the guitarist having downed tools while grieving for Neil Peart in the year after his death. "I didn't really want to do music," he says. "I didn't really want to do anything. But then Andy was like, 'Al, I know you're sitting around at home, so if you feel like recording some guitars in-between your rounds of golf, here's some material.'

"I have to admit it was very casual at first," Lifeson continues. "But Maiah's voice sounded so great and everything changed with the prospect of doing a proper album. Suddenly I felt [sharp intake of breath] 'I'm a musician again!' This is exactly what I need in my life. It felt so good to be doing what I'm supposed to do, what I've been doing my whole life since I was 12 years old."

Wynne, Lifeson and Curran agree that this naturally evolving, almost 'stealth' aspect to Envy Of None's gestation took the pressure off. "There was no deadline," says Curran. "No managers or record company people saying, 'You've got to do this by then.'"

"ALEX AND I HAD TALKED ABOUT STEPPING OUTSIDE OF OUR COMFORT ZONES IN TERMS OF WHAT WE MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO DO."

Andy Curran

While Lifeson contributed his parts at leisure – "A lot of the guitars on this record don't sound like guitars," he notes – the band were still operating under the knockabout moniker 'Middle Of Nowhere'. It was session drummer David Steinberg, Wynne says, who contributed the bandname Envy Of None. Apparently it was a phrase he had heard while at Law School, and one originally coined by the Roman

poet Ovid in the first book of *Tristia*, a collection he wrote while in exile.

"I think we liked the name Envy Of None because it says nothing about the music," smiles Curran. The sleeve art for the band's debut is pleasingly cryptic, too. Depicting two glamorous, 1950s-styled nurses each holding a giant blue pill on a tray, it's the sort of image Hipgnosis might have hatched for a Pink Floyd LP. "Definitely some kind of metaphor," laughs Wynne.

Much more important, of course, was the tight-knit, easy-going working relationship between Envy Of None's members, and both Lifeson and Curran are quick to praise Wynne's talent and professionalism.

"With Maiah, the gap in years is inconsequential," says Lifeson. "It was just incredible how in tune with each other we were despite our many differences. She was so mature and smart and thoughtful."

"Yeah, one of the conversations Alex and I had after I first introduced him to Maiah was how wise beyond her years she is with lyrics and layering harmonies," agrees Curran. "That impressed us straight out of the gate."

As our interview time winds down, *Prog* treads carefully. Lifeson has said he doesn't want to talk about Rush while promoting Envy Of None, but after we've given his new bandmates their due he's happy to discuss *Western Sunset*, the meditative, much more traditional-sounding instrumental that closes EON's debut album, and which Lifeson penned in tribute to Neil Peart, his dear friend and Rush bandmate of some 45 years.

"I started writing *Western Sunset* about a year after that final Rush tour," he says. "It was around the time that we found out about Neil's illness. On many of the visits we made we sat on Neil's balcony, he would sit and smoke cigarettes and I'd try to make him laugh. He lived in Santa Monica, California and the sun would be setting in the west. It was hilly country and we could see the trees where his office looked out.

"I just thought about how calm and serene that moment was," Lifeson continues, visibly moved. "Sitting there not talking about anything other than good thoughts. And thinking about what the sunset means metaphorically — the end of the day and all of those things. So I thought it would be a lovely way of paying tribute without being maudlin, and it was very, very personal for me."

"You know, when Alex asked me to play on that song, I wasn't aware that he'd written it for Neil," chips in Curran. "And I got pretty choked-up when I did find out, so I'm glad Alex didn't tell me beforehand, otherwise I would have totally messed up."

Silent for a few seconds, each of *Prog*'s three interviewees smiles.

Envy Of None's debut album is out now!

"But truthfully," adds Lifeson eventually, "I had mixed feeling about having *Western Sunset* on there. But I think it serves a purpose. There's a lot of information to absorb on this record and we felt *Western Sunset* was a breather; a chance to sit back at the end and process everything."

And what of the Envy Of None record as a whole? Has a certain Mr Lee heard it?

"Geddy has heard it, yeah," says Lifeson. "I sent him a copy and he's been super, super supportive. He actually said he's proud of the way it sounds, which is great. Because of course I'd wondered if he'd be cool with it and he absolutely was."

There's been talk of Envy Of None doing some live shows, and Wynne says her mother has her heart set on them playing much-watched US chat show *Jimmy Kimmel Live*!. Still, all Lifeson, Wynne and Curran confirm today is that they've "talked about exploring what the album might sound like in a live setting."

So, failing a tour or some select gigs, might they make a second Envy Of None album instead? In quick succession, all three interviewees answer in the affirmative. It looks like we're through to the next round...

Envy Of None is out now via Kscope. See www.envyofnone.com for more information.

WALL OF SOUND

“The thing about David [Jackson] is that he will research the stories behind the climbs. He wants to get inside the whole vibe of the track he is putting stuff to.”

Nick Jefferson

The sum of parts: Kaprekar’s Constant.

Folk prog collective **Kaprekar’s Constant** scale new heights on their third album *The Murder Wall*, telling the stories of success and failure conquering the north face of Europe’s most forbidding mountain, the Eiger. The collective’s founders Nick Jefferson, Al Nicholson and Mike Westergaard explain how they drew their inspiration for the album among the ropes and ice picks.

Words: Alison Reijman **Images:** Sean Kelly

“It’s basically a load of limestone that’s rotting away and crumbling,” declares Nick Jefferson. He’s describing the Swiss monolith that inspired 75 minutes of new music on Kaprekar’s Constant’s third record, *The Murder Wall*. The album’s brutal title is the name frequently bestowed on the Eiger’s perilous north face and its songs focus on six attempts made over the decades by brave, but sometimes foolhardy and ill-equipped, mountaineers to scale it.

Epic storytelling is the hallmark of the musical collective, founded by multi-instrumentalists Jefferson and Al Nicholson, which is named after an obscure mathematical theory. The duo previously played together in folk clubs and recorded songs for other artists but reconvened in 2015 with their friend, pianist and producer, Mike Westergaard, because they wanted to write original prog music from the heart. To achieve their musical aims, they enlisted former Van der Graaf musician David Jackson on saxophones, flutes and whistles and his daughter Dorie on vocals, plus Jefferson’s nephew Bill Jefferson on vocals, and their newest recruit, Caravan drummer Mark Walker. They released debut album *Fate Outsmarts Desire* in 2017, followed two years later by *Depth Of Field*, which featured Ian Anderson reciting a poem. Both are full of elaborate musical stories, covering places, people and history, and each contain a track that’s more than 20 minutes long. However, there’s been a deliberate shift towards shorter songs on *The Murder Wall*.

Explains Nicholson: “The songs are a little bit more compact, and the lyrics tie them together. Some tracks are split into parts. We looked at making the songs even more melodic and immediate than before — and using choruses more often.”

It was Nicholson’s Alpine rambles that supplied the storyline: “For some obscure reason, I’ve amassed a collection of books on mountain climbing even though I don’t climb myself,” he muses. “My wife and I like walking in Switzerland, so it was quite amazing to see the Eiger and find out more about the stories that go with it.

“There was also a film out a few years back called *The North Face* about one of the most famous climbs. I gave that to Nick to watch as I knew he could turn it into a good story.”

Jefferson continues, “We originally spoke about doing a concept album, but we also wanted it to be an album which you could play all the way through, and it told various stories around a central theme. Al writes all the music first and presents me with it in batches to which to put the stories. It is then a case of crowbarring the story into the piece of music before we hand it all over to Mike to apply the polish and tidy it all up! We couldn’t do it without his expertise.”

Getting everyone together for the recordings was a challenge during lockdown, admits Westergaard: “Dorie, Bill and David came in quite late with this album. We had to wait for a period when we were not in lockdown and they were able to test [themselves for Covid] before they came down here. Nick had done all the guide vocals and we knew

by then the shape of everything. We got the drums done in a very short period of about two weeks as Mark was going off touring with Caravan.

"We got Bill and Dorie down at various stages trying to do it together and, in the end, we just did the backing vocals. I said to Dorie, 'Take it home and do it' because finding the time together was so difficult — and she did an incredible job. We sent stuff to David, and he did it in his little studio in Suffolk. We gave him a few very vague guidelines — maybe a solo here or something there, and he sent all this wonderful stuff back."

On Jackson, Jefferson says, "The thing about David is that he will research the stories behind the climbs. He wants to get inside the whole vibe of the track he is putting stuff to, and, on occasions, he says, 'I can sense him [the climber] reaching up to do this and that. The piece I have done here is an audio representation of the stuff that is going on.' He goes into incredible detail rather like a classical musician."

The album also includes a guest vocal appearance from Judie Tzuke, best known for her 1979 Top 20 single *Stay With Me Till Dawn*. Through a musical colleague, Westgaard invited her to contribute vocals on *Years To Perfect*. "A friend of mine, drummer Miles Bould, had played on a tour with her, Beverley Craven and Julia Fordham," he says. "We really wanted to find someone to do a guest vocal because we had Ian Anderson doing the poem [on *Rosherville Part Two*] on the last album. We had identified that song as the perfect one for Judie, and because I had this connection, I was able to go through Miles.

"She was an absolute darling — so generous with her time and there was a lot of going backwards and forwards on how she should approach this. What we ended up with is absolutely wonderful. It's a beautiful performance that suits her voice and her voice suits the song."

Referring to the content of each track, Jefferson says: "Some of the stories of the climbs were absolutely bonkers. Why these people do it, goodness only knows — and having studied everybody's books, I still don't get it. It's crazy to think that some can almost run up the mountain now in two and a bit hours. It is so far removed from how they did it back in the 30s."

He continues: "The temptation would have been to use the mountain as being symbolic of something else, such as man's striving to constantly achieve goals and better themselves. That's been done quite a bit with mountains generally. I did slip into that on occasions but generally, I tried to do more than a straight narrative — something that told the story and got into the psyche of the people doing it."

In some instances, one song covers a particular climb, but for the first ever ill-fated attempt on the north face by German climber Toni Kurz, four tracks tell his story from different angles. Then there's the remarkable story of father and son climbers, John Harlin II and III in *The Silent Drum*. The song is told from the father's perspective.

Never mind the Eiger, climbing up that hill was hard enough!

"My wife and I like walking in Switzerland, so it was quite amazing to see the Eiger and find out more about the stories that go with it."
Al Nicholson

Says Jefferson: "That really is an emotional journey that John Harlin III went on to successfully complete the climb 40 years after his father failed to do by a route, which became known as the John Harlin Route. None of the family wanted John Harlin III to attempt the climb bearing in mind what happened to his father. It became an obsession for him to complete the climb his father started as it entailed him going past the point on the mountain where his father's rope had broken, causing him to plunge to his death."

For all the pastoral lushness of the music, might some find the title rather violent? Nicholson responds: "We toyed around with other titles, but when you read all the material, that name crops up so often, and obviously, it reflects the fact the north face has claimed so many lives. It seemed a bit remiss not to use it."

The album is also available on vinyl via Plane Groovy, and there are a couple of festival dates are also lined up for the summer. Jefferson concludes: "We have a couple of gigs planned for August — A New Day Festival and the Cropredy Fringe [aka The Brasenose Fringe], which we have done before and was really enjoyable. We're not really a touring band; we're more of a studio act, but we know that with the new album, there's a need to go out and do some live shows."

The Murder Wall is now out via Talking Elephant Records and on vinyl via Plane Groovy. See www.kaprekarsconstant.com for more information.

IF I HAD SOMEWHERE TO LIVE...

I COULD GO ANYWHERE IN LIFE

When Abi's mum died, life got tough. She didn't get on with her dad and the arguments became violent. Abi felt her only choice was to leave home. With just the clothes on her back, and no idea where to go, she ended up sleeping on the streets in the freezing cold.

Right now, you could give a homeless young person like Abi somewhere to start their future

Abi's life changed when she was given a room at Centrepoint. A safe place to sleep and recover. A place to develop the skills and confidence she needed to rebuild her life – and leave homelessness behind for good. Now, Abi believes she can go anywhere.

Thousands of homeless young people like Abi are desperately trying to find their place in the world – but first they need a place to start again. **You could help right now by sponsoring a room at Centrepoint for just 40p a day.**

We know this support changes lives. 88% of the young people we help move on positively in life. So please, help someone like Abi today. Thank you.

Text PLACE to 78866 to donate £3
Call free on 0800 472 5798
Visit centrepoint.org.uk/place
Or complete and return the form below

SPONSOR A ROOM. HELP A HOMELESS YOUNG PERSON FIND THEIR PLACE.

YES, I WANT TO SPONSOR A ROOM FOR £12 A MONTH

Please collect my payment on the 1st/15th of every month (please circle preferred date).

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit DIRECT Debit

To the Manager:
Name and full address of your Bank or Building Society:

Originators Identification No. 6 5 9 1 0 7

_____

_____ Postcode _____

Name(s) of Account Holder(s) _____

Bank Sort Code: ☐☐-☐☐-☐☐ Account Number: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay Centrepoint Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction, subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Centrepoint and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

Increase your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate with Gift Aid giftaid it

☐ **By ticking this box I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and want Centrepoint to Gift Aid all donations I've made in the last four years and any donations I make in the future until I notify you otherwise. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in any tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.**

Your name and address are needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

Your donation will go towards funding Centrepoint's vital work with young people all year round providing accommodation and support. We sometimes use models and change the names of the young people we work with to protect their identity; however all stories are true and as told by the young person.

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Thank you for donating to Centrepoint today.

We'd love to show the impact of your support and share how young people continue to need your help, through newsletters, fundraising appeals and information about events. Please let us know how best to stay in touch with you by adding your details above, and ticking the relevant boxes:

☐ **Please contact me by email** ☐ **Please contact me by phone**

Last year our supporters helped us change the lives of over 15,000 homeless young people. By letting us know we can count on you, we can continue helping young people with a home and a future.

Your privacy is key.

We promise never to sell or swap your details, and will always keep them secure. You can view our Privacy Notice in full at www.centrepoint.org.uk/privacy. You can opt out of post and change how we communicate with you at any time. Please call 0800 232320 and speak to one of our friendly team or email supportercare@centrepoint.org to do this and ask us any questions.

Please return this form to: Freepost Plus RTXY-LBEA-UTJJ, Angel Fulfilment Services Ltd, Communication Centre, Par Moor Road, Par PL24 2SQ.

Registered office address: Central House, 25 Camperdown Street, London E1 8DZ. Company no. 1929421. Registered Charity no. 292411. Housing association no. H1869. VAT registration no. 649 345 018.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

centre point give homeless young people a future

Registered Charity No 292411.
NAP2021CN

A Spring In His Step

Peter Jones has been making elegant sounds as **Tiger Moth Tales** for almost a full decade, but on his sixth album, he's decided to go back to basics with a more of a traditional prog rock approach. Here, he discusses the upbeat *A Song Of Spring*, the perils of setting tight deadlines, and what lies ahead for Camel.

Words: Rich Wilson **Images:** Rob Reed

Peter Jones is a self-confessed musical hoarder. Writing his own music since the age of 10, the multi-talented Tiger Moth Tales leader has religiously stored away recordings of those tentative sound experiments and will occasionally revisit them for inspiration when cursed with occasional bouts of writer's block.

"There are tracks on this album that have parts on them which are quite old," he explains. "I used to try and write prog when I was really young and in my early teens. I've still got a lot of that stuff and I quite often call upon that if I'm struggling for a bit of inspiration. Even going back as far as being seven or eight I would literally just sit at the piano and just improvise for 10 minutes. I would get to the end of it and think, 'There's a song.' I mean some of it was pretty awful and those tracks will never see the light of day. I never throw anything away so sometimes I can get inspired by something which I probably wrote about 30 years ago."

Formed in 2013, with debut album *Cocoon* appearing a year later, Tiger Moth Tales is essentially a solo project, with Jones responsible for writing and performing the material. This latest release, *A Song Of Spring*, follows on from 2020's *Still Alive*, an album that generally took a more stripped-back, song-oriented approach. Although generally welcomed by his fanbase, Jones is aware that the stylistic alteration may have alarmed some of his listeners. Indeed, in the accompanying press release for this latest album, Jones refers to *A Song Of Spring* as being a return to form, perhaps openly admitting a lack of satisfaction with its predecessor.

Tiger Moth Tales' Peter Jones taps into spring.

"I always get depressed at the beginning of the year and I thought this would be something to do and take my mind off it and everything else that was happening at the time."

Flying Away

Peter Jones gives an update on what's happening with Camel and his extracurricular work with Francis Dunnery.

Over recent years, Jones has become rightly feted in prog circles for his vocal and keyboard prowess, something that's led to his inclusion in both Camel's and Francis Dunnery's live bands. With Camel, this culminated in an appearance at the Royal Albert Hall in 2018.

"The whole tour was wonderful," reminisces Jones with affection. "We really bonded into a family unit and by the time we got to the Royal Albert Hall, we couldn't have been much tighter. It was programmed into us. It was fantastic and so many fantastic artists have played there. Obviously, Camel did back in the day so it was great for Andy and was almost a homecoming kind of thing. It was a fantastic night and of course it's brilliant that we've got a record of it on the DVD and the CD. I listen to that occasionally just think, 'God, that's me up there.'"

Camel are returning to the stage in 2023, something that Jones is clearly anticipating with glee, even if he is somewhat reticent when probed about the potential for a new Camel album.

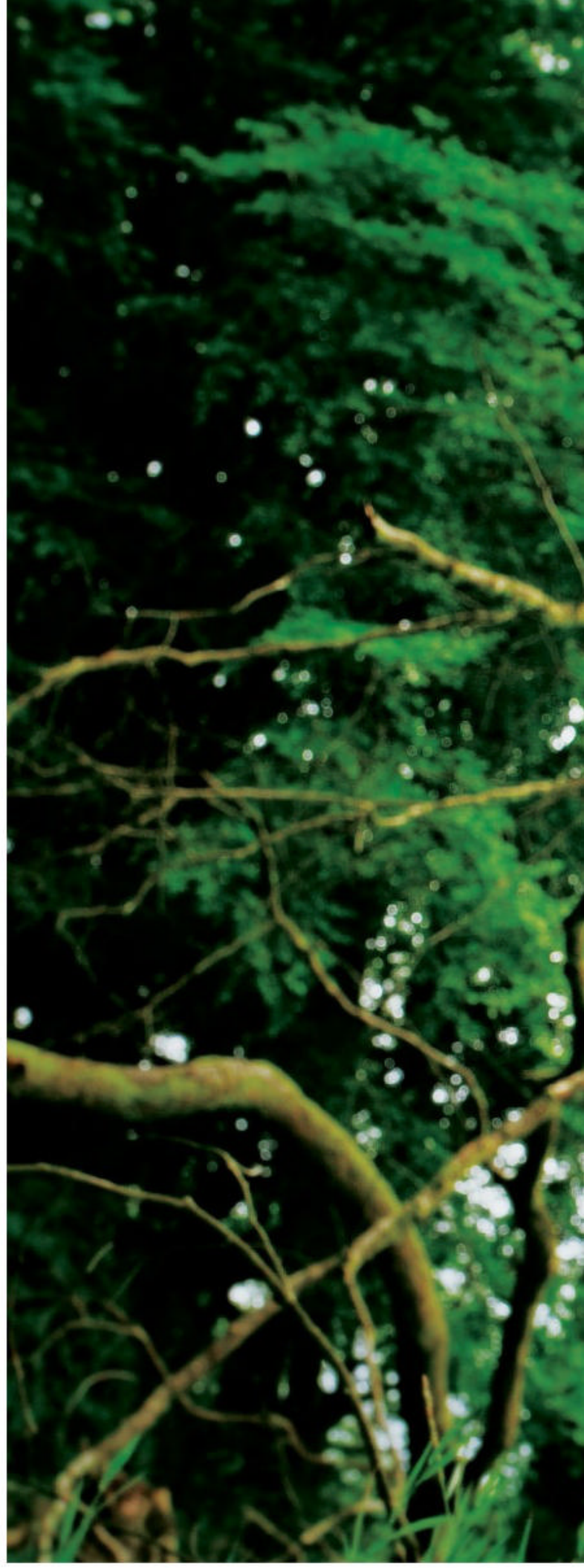
"I'm looking forward to that [tour] and I'll be smiling from ear to ear. We keep in touch about that and kick a few ideas around us to what we are going to do, because obviously it's the 50th year anniversary tour. As for a new Camel album, it has been suggested by literally everybody that I have spoken to. It would be wonderful. I'm trying to think of what Andy Latimer would say here. Probably that we can never rule it out but on the other hand we can't commit to any update on that either."

As for a reunion with Francis Dunnery, there would appear to be no definite plans, although Jones does recall with some terror the rehearsals prior to the Once Around The World Tour.

"It has been fun, of course, but it can wear your brain out a bit sometimes. I don't mind admitting that is some hard stuff to do. There was a point at the end of the first day of rehearsals when I thought, 'I'm the weak link here, this is bad. I'm struggling like hell.' That did get me down a bit but over the next couple of days things picked up and I think that by the skin of my teeth I got away with it. Francis has talked about doing some sort of studio thing and I think he has really enjoyed working with the band doing the It Bites material. Francis has lots of ideas going on at any given time so we'll have to wait and see on that as well. So with Francis, there are no plans as yet but I hope we will do some more It Bites stuff." **RW**

Jones onstage with Camel in 2018.

MIKE GRAY



"What I meant was that maybe it was more to do with other people's expectations," he argues. "It was a very deep album for me and drew on a lot of my own experiences. I don't know. Maybe it was just too personal and a lot of that really came from the heart. With it being so stripped back, I got the impression that some people might have thought, 'This is a bit different and not what we expected.' I may be making all of this up but I thought it was time to come back with a full-on prog experience. To have a bit more bombast, a couple of epics and be more true to what Tiger Moth Tales was traditionally about. I wanted to pull out all the stops with this album. You can be torn: on one hand, you don't want to end up doing the same thing every time because then people will say that it's just the same old stuff. But then if it's too different, you will lose the people who liked what you did before, or you will confuse people. It's a tricky one. Personally, I just like the variety and I hope enough people like it as well."

Writing originally began in February 2021 and Jones had set himself the somewhat restrictive — and arguably preposterous — target of writing and recording in just four weeks, potentially releasing the album shortly afterwards. It's a feat he's achieved on a previous album, but as the writing and melodies developed, it was apparent that he wouldn't achieve that goal.

"I never throw anything away so sometimes I can get inspired by something which I probably wrote about 30 years ago."

"Yes, the idea was to do the album in a month and then have it ready by the beginning of March and maybe put it out in April, so it would still technically be in the spring," recalls Jones. "I knew at the time that it was a tall order but knowing that I've done it once before I was sure that I could do it again. Obviously, whatever happened that first time around, the stars were not aligned this time. It got a lot more complex and had a lot more layers to it. In the end, we got the album finished by the end of June, so there was a lot that went into it plus I got a few other people involved as well. It always takes longer the more people that you get involved. I still wanted to put it out in spring, so decided to sit on it and wait until this year."

Thematically, the record follows on from 2017's *The Depths Of Winter*, and is part of his ongoing 'four seasons' set. As readers may expect, the spring-oriented album has a generally uplifting tone. Indeed, songs such as *Spring Fever*, *Mad March Hare* and *Light* are as spiritually heartening and triumphant as their titles suggest. But aside from the desire to ensure that there was a musical connection to the optimism of the season, Jones also reveals it was an antidote to his own depression that often strikes him in the throes of winter.

It may only be spring but Peter Jones can already feel the summer breeze.

"I always get depressed at the beginning of the year and I thought this would be something to do and take my mind off it and everything else that was happening at the time. Things were looking dark one way or the other and I thought, 'Let's get into something positive.' I suppose it's a well-trodden path, you know, the joys of spring, and it's a pretty obvious thing to do really. I did want it to be largely a celebration album and I think at the time lockdown was still happening and there was a lot of uncertainty. But I don't want the whole album to be the same. There is a lot of cheery stuff on this album with a lot of nice happy tunes but then there are those dark moments as well. I like that contrast."

Away from Tiger Moth Tales, Jones has been a member of Camel's touring band and as a result of that relationship, the album's closing track, *Light*, includes a contribution from Camel guitarist Andrew Latimer. It's something that notably delights Jones when he recalls his work with them and his evident pride at Latimer's distinctive sound being added to one of his albums.

"Andy's such a great guy and we have talked about maybe getting him on one of the albums for a while now," says Jones. "That has really been down to timing, and we had talked about it for previous albums. With this [one], there were a couple of tracks that I had earmarked and I thought we could just leave long spaces that could allow him to really do what he wants. In the end, he contributed to the song *Light*, but that was probably a good thing. It's such a fantastic solo and with it being the end of the album I think it's a highlight, and it's really effective. I'm a very grateful that he took the time to do it and it's an honour."

Given his prolific work rate and the myriad side-projects he's involved in, can we expect to see another release this year?

"I've actually already written a track for the 'summer' album, but now I've also got potentially three or four albums knocking around in my brain," he says. "It's really a race to see which one gets out there first. I'm actually working on a new album now but it's not a seasonal one. So I don't know is a short answer. I had also started the *Storyteller* series and so far there has been a *Part One* and a *Part Two*. I just kind of leave it hanging to see if there will be a *Part Three* and that will happen when it happens. And right now, I think that the *Seasons* album series is the same. We could even do that one this year but we will have to wait and see. Ultimately, it's all rewarding and I've had so much fun with many projects and bands over the years. I'm a very lucky lad."

A Song Of Spring is out now via White Knight Records. See www.tigermothtales.com for more information.

The World's Your Oyster

It's been seven years since prog metallers Symphony X last released an album, but guitarist **Michael Romeo** hasn't been idly twiddling thumbs. *Prog* finds out more about his grand third solo album, *War Of The Worlds, Pt. 2*, and what may be ahead for his day job band.

Words: Chris Cope **Images:** Danny Sanchez

"Who knows? Maybe that's what I'll do today," Symphony X guitarist Michael Romeo surmises at the end of his chat with *Prog* as he talks about finding inspiration for the band's next album. "I'll maybe look at some Poe and Lovecraft. If I find it, I'll know. Or I could just write about *Star Wars*. That'd be easy."

It has been seven long years since the prog metallers' last album, *Underworld*. Some restless fans have grown impatient, but there are valid reasons behind the wait — not least singer Russell Allen being injured in a serious road crash in 2017. But during this time Romeo has been simmering away in his home studio in New Jersey, affectionately known as the Dungeon. New solo record *War Of The Worlds, Pt. 2* follows up his 2018 first-parter, and with the customary epic grandeur interlaced with cinematic orchestration, Symphony X fans should get their fill.

***War Of The Worlds, Pt. 2* is out now!**

"When I start writing for something, I just keep going," Romeo explains. "I usually have too much. I had enough for two records, so I thought, 'You know what? I'll do half now and put half on the back burner and at some point figure out when I finish it.'"

Romeo's *...Pt.1* took Symphony X's familiar, melodic aura and twisted the edges, adding fresh nods to more untapped genres like electronica. Having largely been written at the same time, it's pretty similar fare this time around — virtuoso wizardry remains a key element — although there's the introduction of a new singer, Trans-Siberian Orchestra's touring vocalist Dino Jelusick, while a growling seven-string guitar makes a cameo too.

Instrumental opener *Introduction — Part II* is John Carpenter-meets-*Edward Scissorhands*, while *Divide & Conquer* is turbo-charged, fretboard-frazzling melodic prog metal at its best. It continues to be loosely based on HG Wells' classic novel *War Of The Worlds*, focusing at times on an 'us versus them' theme.

The album also features drummer John Macaluso, who has performed with James LaBrie as well as Norwegian prog metallers Ark, and Black Label Society bassist John 'JD' DeServio.

"The guys on the solo record are awesome dudes, good friends and great players," Romeo says. "It was great writing everything and having that passion, but then having some guys who kind of understood what it is and what is the right thing to do. There were no problems or nothing, it was just seamless."

Carving out a relatively modest solo career — there's been no touring — has allowed Romeo to delve further into his long-held penchant for cinematic music. Symphony X benefits from that too, alongside the neo-classical indulgences, but the guitarist now has something of a free rein.

"How much time have you got?" he says with a smile when asked if any particular soundtracks shaped his love of cinematic music as a youngster. "Obviously *Star Wars* — that was huge, and the music was friggin' huge, and to this day it's like my favourite thing," he continues.

"I just remember being young and those old science fiction movies or monster movies or Ray Harryhausen with the clay, *The 7th Voyage Of Sinbad* and The Cyclops — even the music to that... otherworldly epic kind of stuff. As a kid, it always stuck with me, and now I understand what it is. I like a lot of [John]

“The next Symphony X album has to be something that is kind of epic, kind of grand.”

“When I start writing for something, I just keep going.”

Williams, [Hans] Zimmer and all these guys. You take some guitar riffs, and you take some of that, and you smash it all together.”

Alongside the movies there was a growing love of rock in Romeo’s youth, which morphed from the more conventional AC/DC and Led Zeppelin to Rush, Kansas, Zappa and ELP. “I still love all the metal stuff, but I liked all that [prog] too. And it’s the same thing with classical music too. I wasn’t into Stravinsky or some of the more… I don’t want to say dissonant, but a little bit of the more complex stuff. Early on it was like, ‘Oh yeah, it’s kind of too much’, but now it’s like I fucking love it. So I think everything is a natural progression.”

It feels a little peculiar that Romeo’s life is so enveloped in notes, melodies and rhythms considering he didn’t emerge from a particularly musical family. “No one was really into music except me. Everybody thought there was something wrong with me,” he laughs. “But I did play piano when I was young. It was cool, but it wasn’t really my thing. I think I got an acoustic guitar at a garage sale when I was 14 or 13. And then that was the end of that.”

In latter years Romeo presided over a fairly significant rise to notoriety for Symphony X after forming the group in the mid-1990s, releasing nine albums so far including the stonking *The Divine Wings Of Tragedy* and the rocket-fuelled *The Odyssey*.

So, what about that seven years and waiting? Russell Allen’s accident while on tour with side-project Adrenaline Mob — which resulted in the tragic death of a bandmate and the tour manager — initially raised question marks over the future, and the C-word-that-shall-not-be-named has taken things off-track in the past couple of years too.

“It’s been a while, and there’s just been a lot of things that have happened,” principal songwriter Romeo says as he reflects on where Symphony X are at right now. “We did that record [*Underworld*] and then Russ was with his other band, the Mob guys, and then they had that accident. We weren’t even sure if he was going to keep doing it.

“That’s like a pretty frigging traumatic thing. I remember him saying, like, ‘Dude, I need time to sort shit out.’ I guess something like that just puts everything in perspective. We gave him a little time, so everything just kind of stopped for a minute.”

Romeo also hints, with a dose of angst, that the lack of action in the last couple of years has left the band in a bit of a funk — despite a 25th anniversary tour lined up this year for the US and South America. They’re discussing new material, but as *Prog* chats nothing is off the ground.

“It’s just slow. Even for me. It’s, like, uninspired a little bit, just because you don’t know what’s going to happen.”

Romeo, though, is fairly chuffed with the band’s well-appointed CV after nearly three decades. The goal is fairly simple: to “keep having that fire”. He cites a support tour with Dream Theater in the 2000s, bringing neo-classical metal to arenas, as a highlight, as well the band’s first official show, which happened to be in Japan in 1998: “It’s like, wow, half-way around the world and people are having a good time.”

Romeo is speaking on a video call from the Dungeon, with an army of guitar heads lined up on racks behind. A cauldron of inspiration it may be, but over the stagnant last couple of years the need to, putting it plainly, “get the fuck outta here”, has simmered to the surface like a sore pimple.

But, with a new Symphony X album in the sights the studio is likely to see some magic again. Romeo reveals the band have talked about an *Odyssey* part two, but the group are keen to hit things from a fresh angle.

“Maybe it’s time for some kind of more grand piece,” he adds. “We still haven’t landed on what the topic is going to be. We’re going back and forth with some ideas. It has to be something that is kind of epic, kind of grand, big scope. But I think we’ve picked through everything that’s out there. What the hell else is there? We’ll find it…”

War Of The Worlds, Pt. 2 is out now via InsideOut. See www.facebook.com/MichaelJRomeo for more information.

PAPER LOVES TREES

European forests, which provide wood for making paper, paper packaging and many other products, have been growing by 1,500 football pitches every day!

Discover the story of paper

www.lovepaper.org

Source: Forest and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), 2005 - 2015
European Forests: EU27 + Norway, Switzerland and the UK

LOVE PAPER

“*CLASSIC OBJECTS* MADE ME HEAR WORDS AND MUSIC CLOSER TOGETHER. IT WAS A SPIRITUAL ADVENTURE.”

Jenny Hval: reaching for the unexpected.

The Simple Life

When experimental Norwegian artist **Jenny Hval** found herself forcibly isolated during 2020's lockdown, her musical ideas were stripped back to near-pop song structures. But what Hval calls 'pop' has become *Classic Objects*, her first release on 4AD and one of the most intriguing records you'll hear this year.

Words: Jo Kendall **Images:** Jenny Berger Myhre

It's been 10 years since *Prog* first encountered Jenny Hval, at a Rune Grammofon showcase at the long-since-closed Borderline venue in central London. That evening, Hval appeared in a trio playing after labelmate Phaedra, appearing onstage with her guitar and looking slightly fragile with blonde pageboy hair and shy-ish shuffling between numbers. But, oh, the power in her high-register delivery and her surreal and sexual indie-folk tales, particularly *Engines In The City*, recalling an incident with an electric toothbrush, and the gender-convention questioning *I Got No Strings*. *Viscera* was her debut solo record, and visceral was the experience.

Hval is now on her eighth album and has roamed several tuned-in labels from her collaborator Susanna Wallumrød's SusannaSonata, to Hubro, to Sacred Bones. The new home for her just-released album *Classic Objects* is legendary British label 4AD, formerly home to Bauhaus, Cocteau Twins, This Mortal Coil and Pixies, and recently holding strong with Dry Cleaning, Big Thief, The National and Aldous Harding, among others. Although a fan of the catalogue, that's not been the draw for Hval.

"I'm always excited to work with whoever I work with," Hval tells us on a Zoom call from Oslo. "I always found [record labels] slowly and sensibly, but I was curious when I heard from them. I don't follow labels so much as I follow artists, and I'd spoken with [electronic artist] Holly Herndon who spoke of them highly. Working with a big label has been surprisingly creative and I feel extremely lucky and inspired."

Classic Objects came together during lockdown of 2020, with Hval holed up for two and a half months in her rented flat in Oslo. The place is bright and cosy — today she shows *Prog* her dog Chloe having a snooze on the floor near to her — but during lockdown Hval struggled creatively. An author as well as musician — her second novel, *Girls Against God*, was recently published in English — Hval began writing a manuscript.

"I never have a plan," Hval laughs when asked about the idea behind the project. "When you open a fictional door you can't find reality behind it. So I started with what I thought would be a book. Then I abandoned it because it was too… boring. It was like the world of lockdown, stuck in the four walls of my rooms, impacted my writing. So I started making music."

Hval's creativity took "snippets out of my manuscript" and made "more creative 'rooms'" sonically. Lockdown in her flat, as a situation, became a foundation, which she then layered with imaginary rooms and activity

within them. “I was thinking about my experiences — past, present and hopefully future, or dreamscapes. This made me realise how important music is for me. I then used the language of prose to create ‘scenery’, and I found that different sounds resonated with the way I write words more than I realised before.”

Hval’s chosen instrument for writing tends to be a synth, or computer-based — Hval fell in love with synths at a young age, having heard Vangelis — and *Classic Objects* was built on her digital workstation.

“I work a bit like how you would in [life simulation video game] *The Sims*: you have your apartment and you have to furnish it,” she says. “I use pre-recorded samples mostly as I don’t play any instrument very well. I’ll find finished sounds, I’ll take a note and I’ll work with it. But half the time I work with percussion and I’ll build layers of that, or sounds that are percussion. That creates energy, and I’ll work melodically over the top of that.”

For *Classic Objects* there’s an Arabic-African-style undercurrent that emerged. “I can’t say why!” Hval laughs, although she’d been listening to Sufi devotional songs and Alice Coltrane as well as pop music. “But once I had that, the players expanded on it when we were in a studio.”

In a small window between two virus strains, *Classic Objects* was recorded at Øra Studio in Trondheim.

“This was my most exotic experience of 2021, my highlight of the whole pandemic period,” Hval muses. “It’s my friend Kyrre Laastad’s place, who used to play in my band before he focused on being a studio rat, as we call them in Norway. I’d been working on computer-based editing but this time I craved a studio, and the music craved it, too. We were there for 10 days and I’ve never made a band record like that, recording and producing together.”

Hval admits that, when composing music, “words just fall out of me”, but as an author: “I’ve always struggled with fleshing things out because in my head I have to have sounds there. *Girls Against God* was me describing rites, religion and black metal. I have characters and they need to have a journey, but I never figured out how to make jumps in prose like I can make jumps in music. [*Classic Objects*] made me hear words and music closer together, and that was nice. It was more of a spiritual adventure than, ‘I wrote that chord and then that chord’.”

“SOMETIMES IT’S NOT THAT INTERESTING TO BE RELATABLE.”

The compositions for *Classic Objects* became, in Hval’s notes for the album, “simplified” from perhaps her usual styles, and she states: “I let the songs go a bit their own way and have a verse and chorus, to see what kind of warmth and relationship that I could create even with an imaginary listener.”

Heaven forbid that there might be verses and choruses, but their presence hasn’t blighted a still complex and beautifully thoughtful work that muses on what appear to be easy topics, such as *American Coffee* or a *Year Of Love*, but are always more metaphysical or political. In her late teens and early 20s, Hval left Norway to study creative writing and performance in Melbourne, Australia; her Masters thesis took in how Kate Bush lyrics were performed and transformed by the artist. These threads run through Hval’s work and are partly why her themes can often seem challenging. *Classic Objects*’ stories have Hval going back to being a babe-in-arms and her time studying in Australia, but also include French post-structuralist quotations. Hval’s writing style is always definitely different.

“With creative writing I learned that exercises are really necessary,” she nods. “Ideas are not so, because they come when you do things that challenge you. I also learned that when you do a random exercise in a room full of 19-year-olds, they all write about the lines on their hands or what’s outside of the window. You have to work harder to say something specific. You have to go deeper and go into the uncomfortable thoughts that stir things up. It takes a while to peel off the layers of expectation, what you think looks good and what harmoniously sits with you as a writer. Sometimes it’s not that interesting to be relatable.”

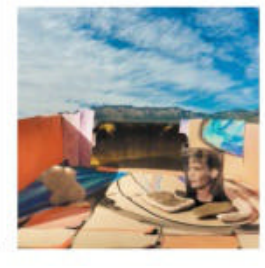
It’s no surprise to learn that some of Hval’s literary inspirations have come from the feminist realm, such as Virginia Woolf (“That was the first time I experienced the world being split in half: before I read one page of her work, and directly after; new colours changed, like in a musical.”), Canadian poet, essayist and classics translator Anne Carson, and American confessional literaturist Chris Kraus (*I Love Dick*). Hval herself could now be considered a notable, quotable feminist figure in her own right.

“I don’t think I could have another perspective,” she says. “Growing up, I found it hard to accept the rules of gender and behaviour, and accepting ‘normcore’ society. However, when some people have asked me about this, it seemed like they thought it got in the way of my creativity, clouding direct speech about art, or over-intellectualising when thinking about positioning, majority and minority.

“That’s changed now,” Hval nods. “I feel like my perspective is less special than when I started studying. I wasn’t taught to question what the feminist perspective is and who those feminists are. I’ve been raised on 90 per cent white middle-class feminism, so there’s a lot to relearn and a lot of perspectives more important than mine. I’m one small part of a spectrum of thoughts which needs to be expanded.”

The art of layering: Jenny Hval takes a different approach on her latest release.

New album *Classic Objects*, is out now.



Classic Objects is out now via 4AD. See www.jennyhval.com for more information.

ON SALE NOW!

300TH ISSUE COLLECTOR'S EDITION
★CLASSIC★ ROCK
HIGH VOLTAGE ROCK'N'ROLL
300
ISSUE
The Ultimate Celebration
ALL-NEW INTERVIEWS WITH ROCK'N'ROLL'S FINEST
STARRING
JIMMY PAGE ★ BRIAN MAY ★ OZZY OSBOURNE
GENE SIMMONS ★ BRUCE DICKINSON
ALICE COOPER ★ GEDDY LEE
+
METALLICA ★ GENESIS ★ AEROSMITH ★ STATUS QUO
DEF LEPPARD ★ SAXON ★ THE DARKNESS
AND MANY, MANY MORE!
ISSUE 300 MAY 2022 PRINTED IN THE UK £5.99
FUTURE
9 771464 783112 05>

Pattern-Seeking Animals: on the way to bigger things.

“I’ve never been a fan of playing live myself and even if I was, I’m not good enough to play with those guys.”

Animal Instinct

John Boegehold defied the gloom of the last two years by escaping into the new worlds he created on the new **Pattern-Seeking Animals** album. The songwriter and band founder talks to *Prog* about cranking up the energy, escaping the side-project label, and steering away from the darkness on *Only Passing Through*.

Words: David West
Images: Mark Berry

"My cocky assertion after the first album was, 'We're going to put out one album per year,'" says John Boegehold, the creative engine behind Pattern-Seeking Animals, the band he formed with Ted Leonard, Dave Meros and Jimmy Keegan in 2018. While a combination of the pandemic and vinyl delays put a crimp in the one-album-a-year plan, Pattern-Seeking Animals still delivered their third record, *Only Passing Through*, less than two years after *Prehensile Tales*.

With album three, Boegehold was determined not to get stuck writing about the pandemic. "Everyone's going to be so sick of this by the time it's over," he says. "'Here's what I wrote about the pandemic while quarantined in my house.' No one wants to hear that right now. [In the 1920s], when the Spanish flu was done, we got the 'Roaring 20s'. Everyone just wanted to party, go out and dance and hear happy music. I could have sat down and gotten very morbid about everything, but I just didn't want to do it."

This mindset demanded that Boegehold resist some of his natural inclinations. "I tend to gravitate towards slightly darker, mid-tempo things. I have to fight against that sometimes," he says. "For this album, I thought the one thing I want to do is make everything a little more up-tempo, more energy to it, more vibrant. It's almost as though there's a big red knob on the mixing board that says 'Energy' and I crank it up 20 per cent."

Boegehold creates detailed demos before handing the songs to his bandmates — singer and guitarist Leonard, bassist Meros, and drummer Keegan — but the final product carries the imprint of all their personalities.

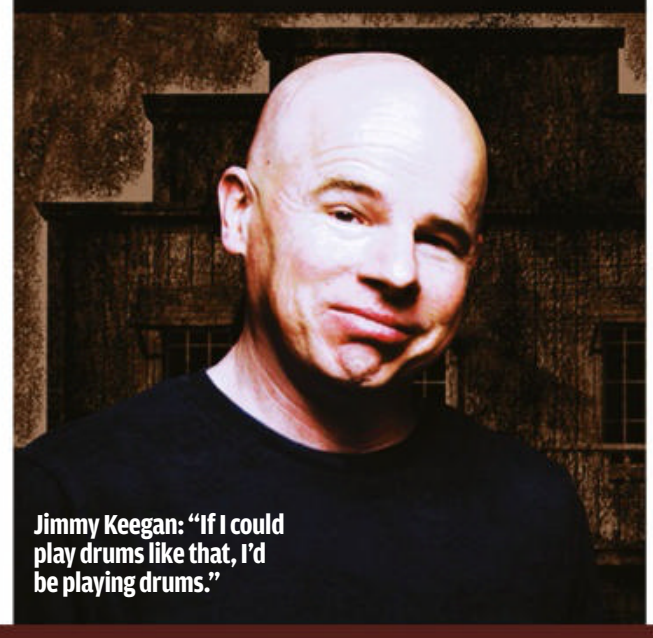
"Even though I may write some of the bass parts, for example, I'll say: 'Hey Dave, for these 16 bars, come up with something cool.' The same thing with Ted, I write the melodies and the lyrics, but he always comes up with different harmonies and cool parts. With Jimmy, I come up with programmed parts for the basic vibe and then when we get to the studio, I let him do his thing. I always figure, why am I going to tell these guys what to do? If I could play drums like that, I'd be playing drums, but he'll come up with much better parts than I ever could, so what's the point?"

Leonard and Meros recorded their parts at their home studios, while Boegehold and Keegan met up to record the drums at Rich Mouser's LA studio, the Mouse House. "Rich has such a great set of ears and is a great engineer. The drum sounds are the best I've ever heard, it's fantastic," says Boegehold. In addition to engineering, Mouser mixes the music, an act that involves balancing the classic influences that inspired Boegehold's love for prog against his contemporary sensibilities. "When we're mixing, Rich or Jimmy will say: 'I really want to make this sound like Phil Collins' drum kit in *Abacab*.' I say: 'No old references, only references from this century,' which is half-kidding but I'm trying to avoid sounding too derivative."

Pattern-Seeking Animals will play at this May's Cruise To The Edge, but Boegehold prefers to leave live performance to the other members: "I've never been a fan of playing live and even if I was, I'm not good enough to play with those guys." Instead, his focus is on crafting the best record possible. "I've always been more of a creature of the studio; I just want to make a record that sounds really good. If you're writing specifically for something you'll play live, you might be short-changing the album. The vast majority of people hearing this music are not going to be hearing it live, they're going to be hearing the album."

Much Ado and bonus track *I'm Not Alright* were written by Ted Leonard, yet Leonard and Boegehold find their inspiration in very different ways. Where the former draws on his own experiences, Boegehold favours science fiction concepts and themes. "I talk to Ted about this all the time," says Boegehold. "Ted says: 'I can't write right now because I'm happy with my life.' He writes his best stuff when he's going through a divorce or someone dying; that's when he gets inspiration. I just always think my life is really boring, why would I want to write about it? I tend to look at things more as writing a short story where I come up with a situation and make up characters and write those into the lyrics."

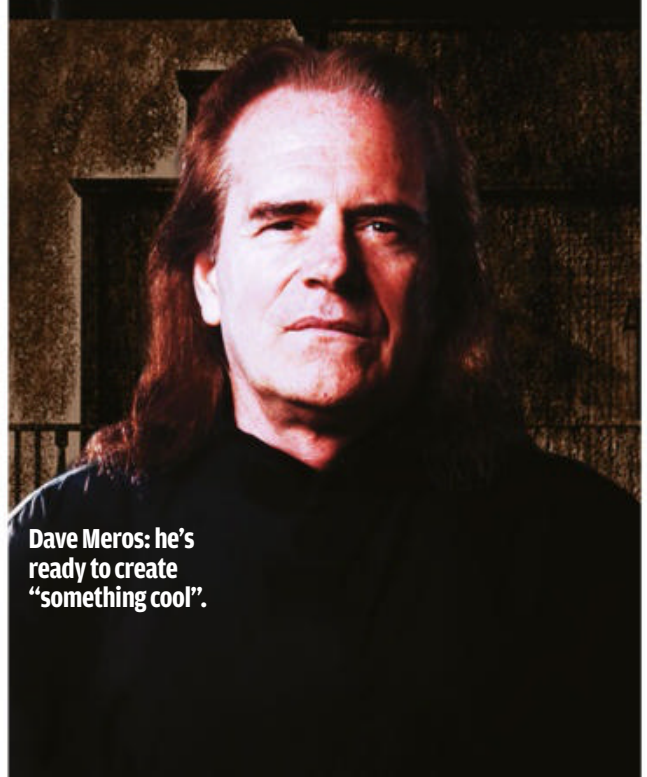
Ted Leonard: always coming up with different harmonies.



Jimmy Keegan: "If I could play drums like that, I'd be playing drums."

"I thought the one thing I want to do is make everything a little more up-tempo, more energy to it, more vibrant."

John Boegehold: "I've always been more of a creature of the studio."



Dave Meros: he's ready to create "something cool".

I Can't Stay Here Anymore explores his sci-fi leanings. "I got this vision of a guy who grows up in a town that turns repressive, kind of a dystopian planet that's getting worse and worse and the guy has just got to get out," he says, and the concept is accompanied by a catchy melody. "That's one of the ones where I was thinking: 'Okay, got to keep the energy up on this album and not get too dragged down.' It would be very easy for me to fall into a vibe like *Brave* by Marillion or Pink Floyd's *Meddle*, where it's slogging along but with a really cool darkness. I was trying to make it real sing-songy, like a real hook even though it's in 11."

The title track is a tune Boegehold wrote for *Prehensile Tales* before deciding it didn't fit there, so he reworked it for the new album. "The imagery is of some guy who leaves a group of people he'd grown up with, like, 'I'm only passing through,'" he explains. "You can take that as being 'I'm only passing through town', and, if you want to speak metaphysically, we're only passing through this life or this astral plane. In *Time Has A Way* there's a middle section that's like an old 60s gunslinger ballad: the guy who goes through the old western towns looking for the woman he loved, that type of thing. I was going to try to fit *Only Passing Through* into that, because that's something you'd hear in a western: 'Only passing through, ma'am.' I just like the different ways you can take that title."

Despite his love for creating characters and worlds, Boegehold isn't tempted by the lure of a full-blown concept album. "Once in a while I think, 'I'm going to do a concept album', then I have to slap myself out of that because what happens with concept albums is I would get two songs in and think: 'Well, I've said everything I need to say, what am I going to do? I'm just going to pad everything so it fills up an album?' I can't do it."

While Leonard, Meros and Keegan are all current or former members of Spock's Beard, perhaps *Only Passing Through* will be the album that takes Pattern-Seeking Animals out of the shadow of Spock's. "I still get the thing, 'Oh, you're the Spock's Beard spin-off or side project'. I was never in Spock's Beard," says Boegehold. "I wrote with them, I worked with them on the side because I was always doing my own thing. I understand why people associate it with Ted and Dave and Jimmy in the band, but at this point we're coming out with our third album since the last time they put one out, so I feel we're established."

The quartet have more than earned their place in prog's pantheon, even if Boegehold isn't quite sure where that might be. "I don't even know where you'd put us, I guess 'American symphonic art-prog-pop'?" he says. "I'm just trying to make music people like."

Only Passing Through is out now via InsideOut. See www.psanimals1.com for more information.

CELEBRATE THE MAKING OF RUSH WITH OUR ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO TORONTO'S FINEST

Explore the very best Rush articles from the archives of Classic Rock and Prog magazines, from the stories behind their classic albums to exclusive interviews with the band and a full Rush buyer's guide

ON SALE NOW

FUTURE

Ordering is easy. Go online at:

magazinesdirect.com

Or get it from selected supermarkets & newsagents

Let There Be Light

When kosmiche pioneer **Michael Rother** embarked on a two-day drive from Germany to Italy to spend time with his partner, **Vittoria Maccabruni**, he had no idea that a sparkling new album would be the result. The couple tell *Prog* how *As Long As The Light* brought hope during dark times with a little help from David Lynch's filmography.

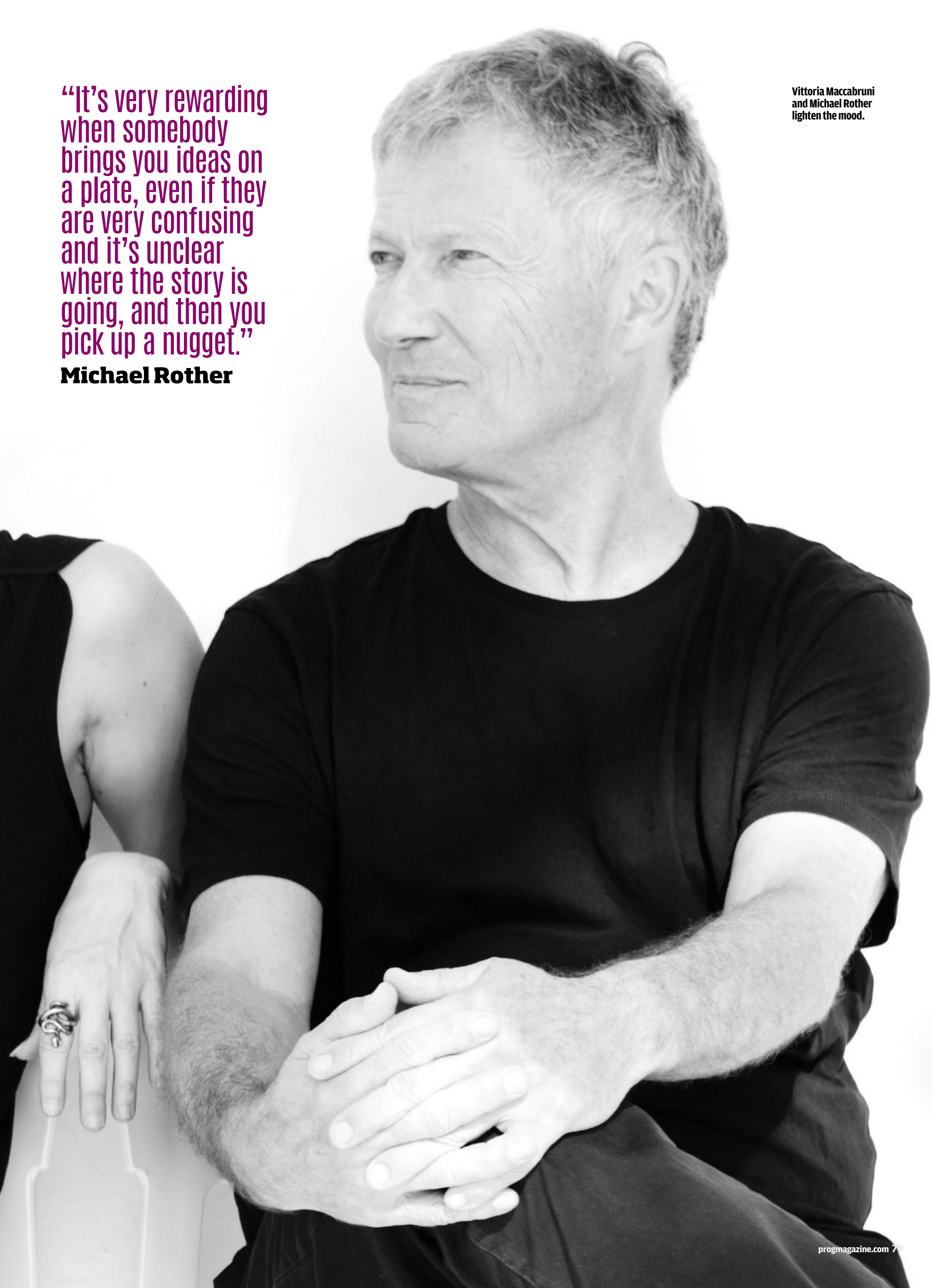
Words: Julian Marszalek **Images:** Marina Arienzale

"It's an interesting point." Michael Rother pauses mid-flow as he stops to compare the working methods of Harmonia — the kosmische 'supergroup' he formed with Cluster's Hans-Joachim Roedelius and Dieter Moebius in 1973 — and the composition and construction of *As Long As The Light*, the new album that he's just released with his life partner and new musical collaborator, Vittoria Maccabruni. For whether he consciously intended it or not, the similarities between the projects are difficult to ignore.

Lest we forget, guitarist Michael Rother is a true pioneer. Now aged 71, but looking at least 10 years younger, he's best known for his idiosyncratic work in Neu! with drummer Klaus Dinger, whom he met in an early line-up of Kraftwerk. The pair — alongside bands such as Can, Faust, Tangerine Dream, Ash Ra Tempel, Popol Vuh and Amon Düül II among others — set about rejecting the orthodoxy of American and British rock music to

“It’s very rewarding when somebody brings you ideas on a plate, even if they are very confusing and it’s unclear where the story is going, and then you pick up a nugget.”

Michael Rother



Vittoria Maccabruni and Michael Rother lighten the mood.

Rother's two-day journey to visit Maccabruni resulted in an unexpected album.

reclaim and reset contemporary German culture in the wake of the ruins left by the Third Reich.

His output with Harmonia, in the shape of the albums *Musik Von Harmonia* (1974) and the following year's *Deluxe*, came to the attention of Brian Eno, who would later work with the band while declaring them "the world's most important rock group", as well as David Bowie. Indeed, Bowie was so impressed by what was then emerging from the German underground that he returned to Europe from his spiritually bankrupt stay in Los Angeles, almost worked with Rother on 1977's *Heroes* and eventually helped himself to a hefty lift from Harmonia's *Monza (Rauf Und Runter)* for *Red Sails* on 1979's *Lodger*.

Unlike Neu!'s working methods of heading to a deadline under the aegis of celebrated producer Conny Plank, Harmonia was a domestic arrangement that found Rother living and recording with his musical partners at their own pace in a converted farm house in Bevern-Forst, northwestern Germany — a location that Rother still calls home. And now, some 47 years later, Rother has once again found himself working with a collaborator under comparable circumstances.

"The similarity between then and now comes because there was me reacting to input from Roedelius and Moebius in a different way to the situation with Neu!, where Klaus Dinger and I were in the studio like two action painters getting a picture together in as little time as possible," says Rother. "With Harmonia, it was very slow and I loved that collaboration; it was a very important project for me. I look back on it with a lot fondness and I really learned a lot.

"Coming back to Vittoria and our project, it's very rewarding when somebody brings you ideas on a plate, even if they are very confusing and it's unclear where the story is going, and then you pick up a nugget. That's the similarity with Harmonia — where I listen to what other people did."

Michael Rother is enjoying something of a recording renaissance. Though he's been touring regularly since the beginning of the millennium thanks to an upgrade in technology that ensures he can recreate the sounds of the studio onstage, he hasn't exactly been rushing to make albums. All that changed with 2020's *Dreaming*, his first album since *Remember (The Great Adventure)* in 2004, and with the addition of *As Long As The Light* Rother hasn't participated in such an intense burst of recorded activity since the 80s. But what's taken him so long?

"I started my own studio and so for many years I was totally happy spending endless hours there," he explains. "I recorded and released quite a few albums, but then this experience touring with Dieter Moebius in the States and then in Japan, and having the possibility of recreating many ideas on stage for the first time — as a solo artist or with a small group of people — this was something that thrilled me. On the other hand, the idea or the thought of sitting in my studio for weeks on my own and fumbling around was not as thrilling, and that's why I think the long break happened."

Michael Rother and Vittoria Maccabruni's collaboration came about through the global pandemic. The pair had originally met in 2005 when Rother was touring Italy with Dieter Moebius, and they've been a couple ever since. With Maccabruni based in Pisa, Italy, and Rother forced to cancel his upcoming touring commitments, the guitarist loaded up his car with his instruments and personal effects and made the two-day journey south from Germany just as soon as lockdown restrictions were eased in June 2020. And it was while the pair were settling into their new domestic arrangements that Maccabruni presented Rother with a series of electronic ideas and sketches that she'd been developing over a number of years.

"I always struggled to make them into a form that was like a song," admits Maccabruni. "It was more like experimenting with sounds and creating impressions. They didn't have to necessarily be a particular length. It was a kind of exploration."

She continues: "They were ideas that I'd been working on and I wanted to hear Michael's opinion. I wanted mostly to get advice from him about

how I could better them or expand them. Suddenly, he also started making more and more of a contribution and so we started working together. So my stuff became our stuff and we expanded it together."

"I listened to these ideas and I picked up the guitar and played a few notes, and then a few more notes," recalls Rother of the album's gestation. "One thing led to another. Even when that first track was finished, we just felt happy: 'Oh! We did a nice track! Let's do it again!' For me, at least, it wasn't clear that we were going to record and release an album until we were halfway through. So it was all very relaxed and we just had fun working on music.

"Vittoria had a big bag full of sketches," he adds. "There was so much to choose from."

The resulting album, recorded at Maccabruni's home in between parenting duties, is a superb fusion of her fleshed out electronic sketches and Rother's unmistakable guitar tone, which brings a sense of warmth and humanity throughout. Painting with broad brush strokes, *As Long As The Light* moves smoothly from the welcoming beats and soaring guitar lines of *Exp 1* through to the more conventional songwriting of the haunting *You Look At Me* as Maccabruni intones, '*You look at me like I'm a stranger*', via the dark, throbbing psychedelia of *Codrive Me*. And, as evidenced most strongly on the utterly sublime *Happy (Slow Burner)*, the entire album is underpinned by a beguiling cinematic quality.

By their own admission, much of the album's music was composed under the influence of moving images, specifically the more sinister corners of the movie world.

"We had some images that came to us after hearing what was developing," explains Maccabruni. "With *Drive Me*, for instance, which is very dark, it has this organic yet electronic sound that feels like breathing and heartbeats. We thought, this sounds like a David Lynch theme. It could actually work with some of the darker scenes of some of his films."

"I should add that we are both film enthusiasts," says Rother. "Vittoria more or less introduced me to the work of David Lynch. When his films first came out in Germany, I didn't have any interest in them. *Twin Peaks* didn't reach me, so we watched that. Both of us are interested in visuals and film stories and atmospherics, and maybe that's part of the explanation."

He continues: "Usually, I don't go for dark sounds or maybe mysterious sounds like *Feuerland* on *Flammende Herzen* [1977], but in this case it was just something that impressed me with the raw materials that Vittoria had, and so I tried to create something that complemented it or balanced it. I think the common thing for us are these cinematic soundscapes."

> "It's a very simple concept behind the title. When it's a sunny day, you feel happier, and dark days always have an angle of light coming from somewhere."
>
> **Vittoria Maccabruni**

As people the world over will attest, life in lockdown hasn't been the most stress free of experiences. So with this in mind, how easy or difficult was it for these life partners to work on music together?

"Of course, we did have arguments," admits Rother. "But this is necessary, otherwise I wouldn't be working with Vittoria. She has a strong artistic idea and vision. We don't always immediately agree, so sometimes there is like a tug-of-war going on: which is the best idea? Are these guitars too loud? So it wasn't always a case of saying, 'Yes dear, everything is great'. It was a lively case of not agreeing."

But for all of the album's occasional creative tensions, the record's title suggests a sense of optimism that's at odds with current mood of global gloom. And that's something that was completely intentional.

"That's the basic idea," confirms Maccabruni. "There are dark moments in the album and in our lives currently, and this is strange. We somehow felt privileged being able to be together because before we lived in two different countries. Somehow the lockdown gave us the opportunity to live together and we didn't have to travel so much. He had time to come here to be with me and my daughter for longer periods.

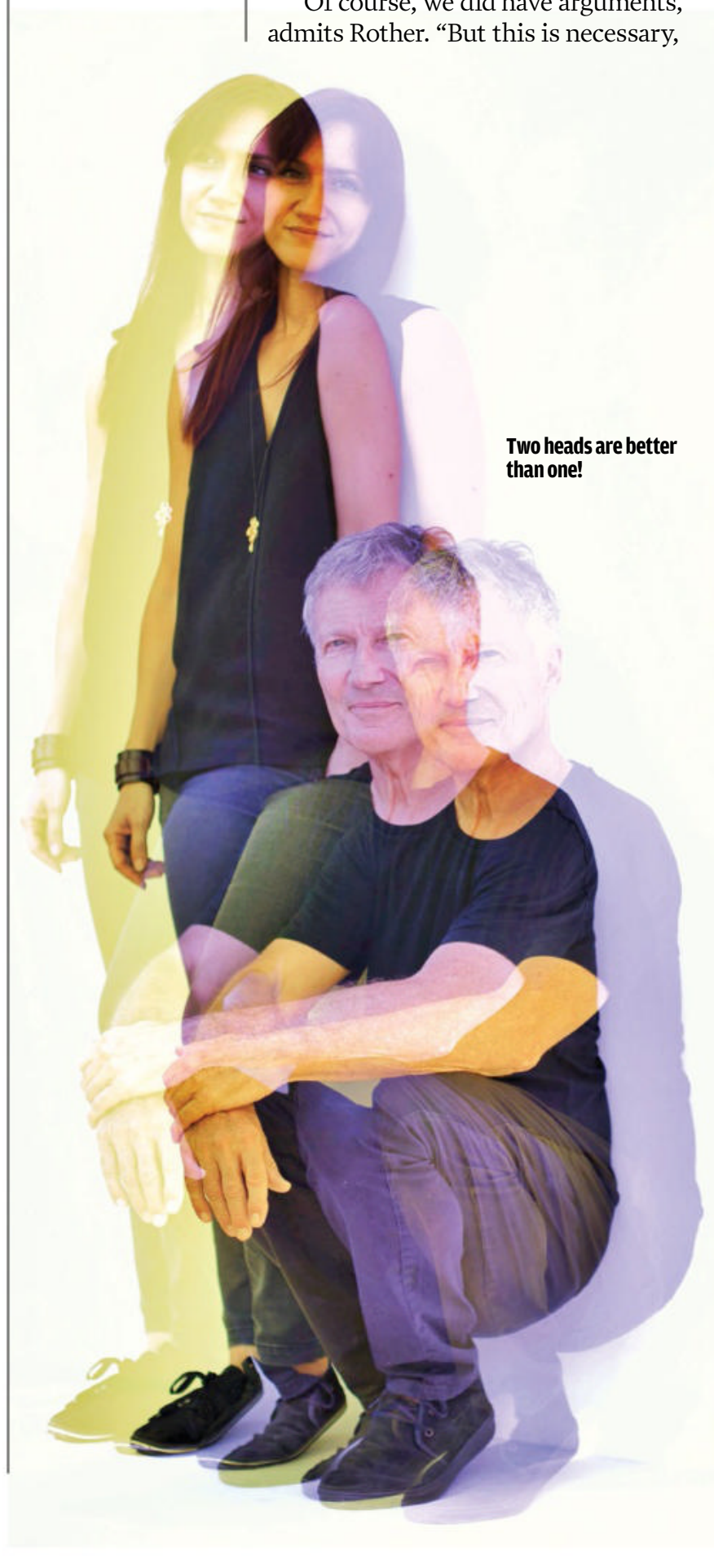
"It's a very simple concept behind the title," she adds. "When it's a sunny day, you feel happier, and dark days always have an angle of light coming from somewhere."

What's also noteworthy is that, even this far down the line of an incredibly distinguished career, Michael Rother manages to feel that he's achieved something new with *As Long As The Light*. Though he's loath to position himself behind the microphone, he clearly takes pride in persuading Maccabruni to handle the album's vocal contributions.

"I had a hard time convincing Vittoria," he says. "Everybody knows this problem: a person hears their voice from inside and if you hear it from the outside, it doesn't sound like that. You think, 'What a stupid voice!' And that was a bridge she had to cross, but I nudged her along. I think she has a wonderful voice and it was a great joy to play guitar on *You Look At Me*. For me, this is a reward. I will probably never open my mouth to sing because it would just sound terrible. But in terms of achievement, I can only say that it came out very well, and it's a big reward to suddenly have the album in my hand."

Looking ahead, Michael Rother and Vittoria Maccabruni are confident of eventually taking *As Long As The Light* out on the road. "We want to play live, so we're refurbishing the setup," says Rother. "It's always my wish to have people moving in front of me."

Waving goodbye, their optimism is infectious. Long may it shine.



Two heads are better than one!

As Long As The Light is out now via Grönland. See www.michaelrother.de for more information.

Rising • New Dawn

After eight years, several line-up changes and a major relocation, Cornwall-based symphonic proggers **The Emerald Dawn** are finally starting to make some waves. Following the release of their fourth album, *To Touch The Sky*, the quartet's vocalist and keyboard player Tree Stewart and guitarist Ally Carter take *Prog* on a musical journey from Scotland to England's south-west coast.

Words: Stephen Lambe **Images:** Graham Stead

"We were gobsmacked, it was totally unexpected!" says The Emerald Dawn's keyboardist and vocalist Tree Stewart when *Prog* asks for her reaction to their polling in sixth place in the Unsigned Band category in our recent readers' poll.

"We've always considered ourselves an underground band," continues Stewart's partner in music and in life, guitarist and sax player Ally Carter. "The prog I got into in the late 60s and early 70s was underground music. Radio Caroline or John Peel might play something, but you really didn't hear it regularly unless you went to concerts. But for the readers to vote for us means that we're not perhaps as underground as we thought."

The question of whether the whole idea of being 'unsigned' is something of an outmoded concept anyway arises, considering that they effectively have their own imprint, World's End Records. Tree smiles: "I'm not sure a [major] label would want to sign us anyway. We're fiercely independent with the way we make music and the way we create our artwork."

That artwork is a real feature of the band's image, and with the latest album *To Touch The Sky* out now via World's End and also available on vinyl through Chris Topham's Plane Groovy label, it's a real opportunity for her work to be seen to its full potential. But the release was not originally the band's idea, as Stewart confirms: "Chris saw how well the album was doing and, having seen the band live, it was actually his idea to release the album on vinyl."

Carter concurs with understandable pride: "It's not hard to work out that when you look at our artwork, each sleeve was designed to be a gatefold. Even though each album has been released on CD up until now, Tree persevered in the hope we'd get a vinyl release eventually. We thought of doing that ourselves, but we just don't have access to the right distribution to sell enough copies. Chris does, and we're particularly thrilled that he's chosen to release it as a gatefold, especially as he doesn't do that for everything."

St Ives in Cornwall, the band's home, is more associated with fishing than with progressive rock, but the band, with three more albums now under their belts since debut *In Search Of The Lost Key* in 2014, have gradually built a strong following in the progressive rock community. Perhaps their continuing success is down to a certain fearlessness in playing live whenever they can, especially as they were one of the first bands out of the blocks when lockdown began to be lifted last year.

Tree Stewart's gatefold artwork for *To Touch The Sky*.

"For a long time, we only played in Cornwall," Carter remembers. "People would say to us: 'We hear you're pretty good, but we've only got your records to go on.' So, we planned a whole tour for 2020. We spent a year putting it together, then just as we got to our first gig in Exeter, the virus said: 'No more.' So as soon as lockdown lifted, we decided that we'd play wherever anyone wanted us. Before that, the planned gigs had been consecutive, cutting down on transportation costs, but now they were a lot patchier, but we still did it."

But Cornwall was not the duo's original home. Their origins — confirmed by Stewart's Caledonian burr — are in Scotland; Edinburgh, to be precise. The vocalist explains: "I was running a performing arts company in Edinburgh and Ally was working at the university in Glasgow and living in the capital, so he used to prop up the bar at our venue. Ally played guitar and I'd played the organ for many years, so when I admitted this one day he got a keyboard from under his bed, and we played together. It sounded amazing."

"I'd played in guitar duos," confirms Carter, "but tonally, they tend to sound too similar, so when we played together for the first time it sounded like coming home. It felt perfect, so we started composing together."

Stewart adds: "Eventually, my company folded, and Ally took early retirement. We decided to leave Scotland, so we went on a trip to work out where we'd like to live. I loved St Ives and Ally had always wanted to live there. So we moved to Cornwall!"

How, then, did the band end up sounding the way it does? Carter ponders. "Tree and I wanted to play a certain type of music. It's not the sort you listen to when you are cooking; it's music to play in the dark, where you can let it take you on a journey. So, a real influence was albums like *Lizard* by King Crimson, where the listener could participate directly in a medieval battle. We didn't know if we could achieve such an ideal, but we gave it a try."

One of the features of the band is the quality of its rhythm section — David Greenaway on bass and drummer Tom Jackson — both versatile, subtle players. Stewart enthuses: "Dave is incredible; he's been playing since he was 17. He's toured worldwide, so it's amazing we found him and that he lives in Cornwall!"

"Tom, on the other hand, can play anything," says Carter. "He's in everything from a fusion group to a big band, to covers outfits."

Given that there's very little money to be made in the world of prog, how does the band retain two such skilled full-time musicians? Stewart has no doubts that their professional rhythm section gets as much out of the music as she and Carter do. "In this project, we can all be totally creative. Tom and Dave rarely get to do that anywhere else because to earn a living they often have to play music they have very little say in. To play to such a knowledgeable audience is a real thrill for them, just as it is for us. It's what drives us forward."

To Touch The Sky is out now via World's End Records and Plane Groovy. For more information see www.theemeralddawn.net.

“We’ve always considered ourselves an underground band.”

Ally Carter

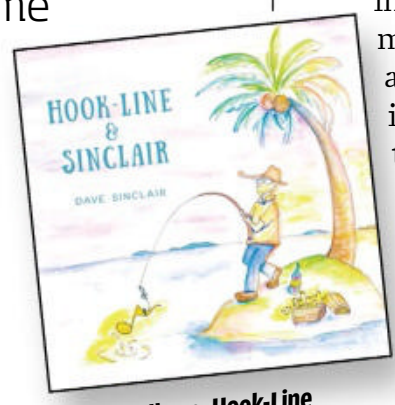
The Emerald Dawn, L-R: Dave Greenaway, Tree Stewart, Tom Jackson, Ally Carter.

THE PROG INTERVIEW

DAVE SINCLAIR

Every month we get inside the mind of one of the biggest names in music. This issue it's **Dave Sinclair**. A former member of The Wilde Flowers and Caravan co-founder, his CV reads like a Who's Who of the Canterbury scene with stints in Camel and Hatfield And The North. This keyboard player and songwriter is also a solo artist in his own right and, for the last couple of decades, has been living in Japan. His latest release, *Hook-Line & Sinclair*, collates unreleased home and studio recordings from the last 40 years and includes guest appearances from his old bandmates Robert Wyatt, Pye Hastings, Jimmy Hastings and Richard Sinclair. He discusses his career so far.

Words: Malcolm Dome



Current album, Hook-Line & Sinclair, is out now.

Dave Sinclair is one of the cornerstones of the Canterbury sound. Not only was he a member of The Wilde Flowers, the band who began it all, but he played a vital role in Caravan during the late 60s and early 70s when they created much of the music that's defined their storied career.

Aside from being in and out of Caravan five times across the decades, Sinclair has also been involved with Matching Mole and Hatfield And The North (the latter with his cousin, bassist Richard Sinclair), as well as very briefly being in Camel. He's also been prolific as a solo artist. In 2003 he issued *Full Circle* and *Into The Sun*, and has also released *Pianoworks I* (2010), *Stream* (2011), *The Little Things* (2014) and *Out Of Sinc* (2018). Last year, he put out the latest in the line, *Hook-Line & Sinclair*, on his own Dsincs-Music label.

For more than two decades Sinclair ran his own piano shop in Herne Bay, but in the mid-2000s he moved across the world to Kyoto in Japan, later relocating to the Kamijima region of the same country. He celebrated his 74th birthday last November and Sinclair shows no signs of slowing down, but with a career that now spans seven decades he has a right to be viewed as one of the doyens of a scene and sound which has played such a key role in the progressive world.

No holiday: Sinclair and Caravan in '69 during the first of his five stints.

PRESS/CARAVAN ARCHIVES

> "For me the magic in Caravan was always about those first three albums and what we did together. It was still there when we did *Back To Front*."

What music do you recall listening to as a child?
My father was always playing classical records and loved composers like Vaughan Williams and Elgar. My mother was more into the pop music of the day, singers like Frankie Vaughan. I loved Russian composers when I was growing up. Borodin's *Polovtisan Dances* really appealed to me. Not only because of its power, but also the beautiful melodies. I realised early on that people are drawn to a great melody, whatever the musical genre.

Your aunt inspired your interest in playing the piano. How did she do that?
Ah, my Aunt Girlie. She used to sit at the piano, with a cigarette hanging out of her mouth, and vamp it up in the same way as Russ Conway. The way she played entranced me. It was her husband who taught me four chords on the piano – and I was away.

You had a few piano lessons before giving these up. Did

COURTESY OF DAVE SINCLAIR/YOSUKE ITO

Sinclair fell in love with his chosen homeland in the late 60s.

PETER MAZEL/AVALON

Dave Sinclair (left) with cousin Richard (right) and Camel, with whom he played in the late 70s.

the lessons put you off playing at all?
I had just two and a half. I learnt to play a piece after reading it and from then on did it from memory. The same piece every time. During the third lesson, I think my teacher realised that I wasn't following what was written, so she put a different piece of sheet music in front of me. I never glanced at it, but just played what I had always done. She wasn't impressed and refused to teach me any more.

Did it put me off? No. I loved sneaking down in the middle of the night when nobody was around, play very softly and write my own music. But my parents could hear what I was up to and sent me back to bed.

Your first band was The Wilde Flowers. Why do you think they didn't have much success?
The constant line-up changes didn't help, and the fact that people only wanted to hear us play Motown and soul songs at gigs so they could dance. We never had the chance to play our own stuff. And it soon became obvious we were going nowhere.

Caravan's third album, in 1971.

How did The Wilde Flowers become Caravan?
Richard Sinclair, Pye Hastings, Richard Coughlan and myself didn't want to play soul covers with The Wilde Flowers any more. But Dave Lawrence, who was the bassist, was really into soul. So the four of us decided to quit the band and then reform as Caravan. We quickly moved to London and had a tough time.

Pye's sister Jane let us live at her flat because she was in Formentera, but we were broke and there were always bailiffs coming round to take stuff like the TV, as bills were unpaid. Pye and I would go out in the early mornings and if we saw a place with 10 bottles of milk outside, we'd nick one — after all, it wouldn't be missed!

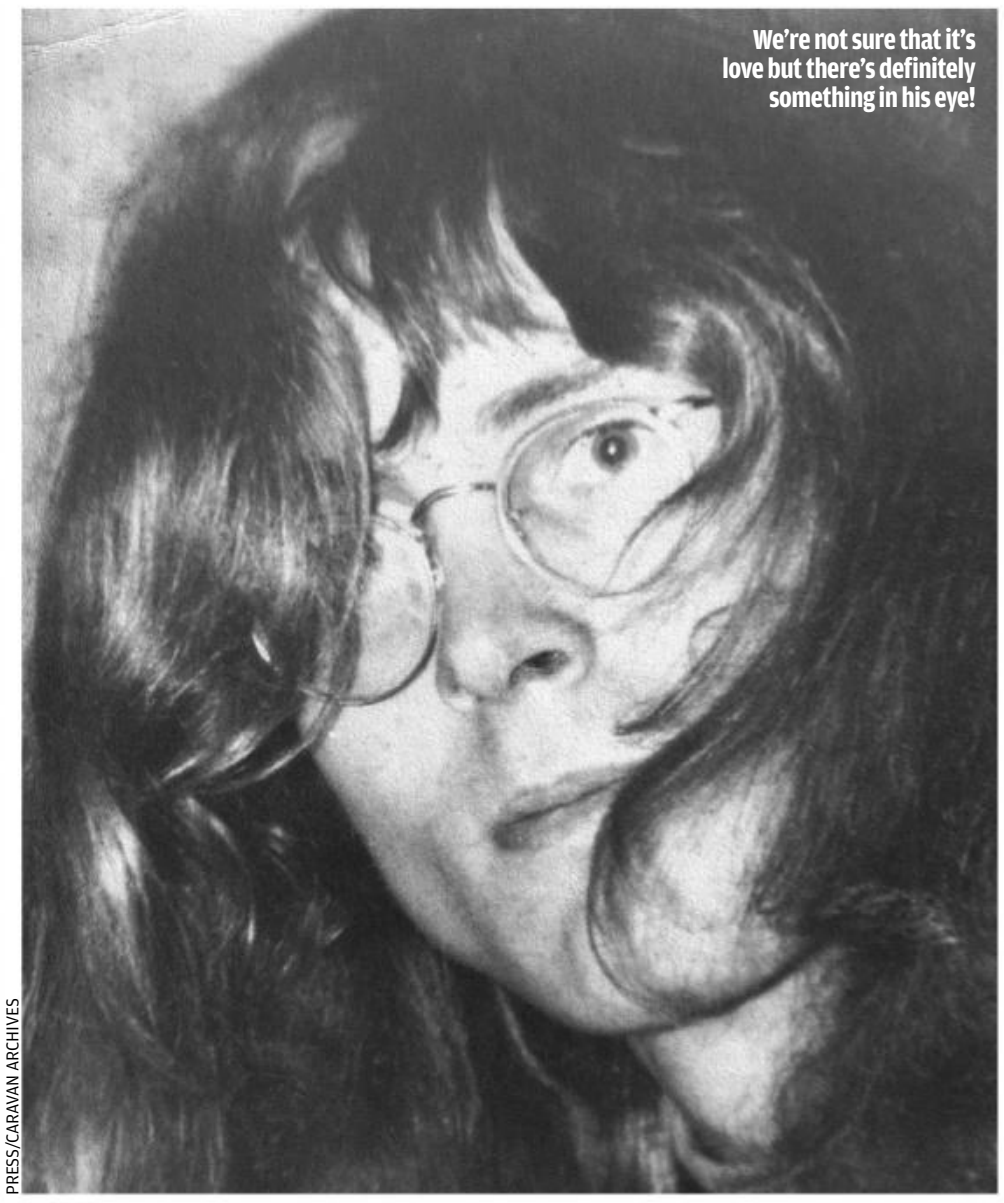
The band played on *Top Of The Pops* in 1970, performing *If I Could Do It All Over Again*. What are your recollections of that?
It was an amazing experience. We could have anything we wanted. We had our hair done, and makeup was applied and we really dressed up for the performance. We had to re-record the song and then mime to this on the show.

Straight after we'd finished, I left for a 10-day holiday in Spain with my cousin Nigel Blow. But Richard Coughlan told me later on that some naughty stuff happened after I'd gone! What did I think? I was away when it was broadcast and have never seen it.

Why did you decide to leave Caravan in 1971?
We didn't get a lot of recognition for *In The Land Of Grey And Pink* when the album came out in 1971. As a result I started to wonder where it was all going. There was also a problem with my equipment. The others had all upgraded what they were using, but while I wanted a Hammond organ, it was too expensive, so

COURTESY OF DAVE SINCLAIR/ YOSUKE ITO

Enjoying life since he moved *into the sun*.



PRESS/CARAVAN ARCHIVES

We're not sure that it's love but there's definitely something in his eye!

> Richard Sinclair was in Camel at the time and recommended me to take over from Pete Bardens. I don't actually think Andy Latimer knew who I was.

I had to be content with my Vox Continental. So onstage I was being drowned out by the guys — I couldn't hear what I was playing. It all got too much and I told them I needed a change. They just replied: "Oh, okay then." Nobody tried to talk me out of the decision.

How did you come to join Matching Mole?

I met up with this musician named John Murphy at a pub in Canterbury, and he suggested we start working together. It was all going well, and then he got married and went on honeymoon to the Algarve. Naively, I decided to follow him out there to carry on our musical alliance. I hitch-hiked all the way and turned up on his doorstep. You can imagine he was shocked to see me, especially when I said I'd come out to continue the work — you can't blame him for not being happy; he was on his honeymoon.

Anyway, five days later I got a telegram from Robert Wyatt who'd tracked me down to Portugal. It said: "'Come back, your country needs you." I had no money, so got the British Embassy to repatriate me back to England. Robert wanted to hear the songs I'd been writing, and one in particular made an impression on him; this would become the Matching Mole single *O Caroline*, with Robert coming up with his own lyrics. Once he heard that tune, Robert asked me to join the band.

You left them in 1972. What happened there?

I wasn't at all comfortable with the type of jazz-style music the band were doing, and feeling very stressed. Because of this, I felt I was holding back from what I really wanted to do, which was more song-oriented and rockier. So I quit.

You were then briefly in Hatfield And The North with your cousin Richard Sinclair.

I have to say that the people in the band were excellent musicians and really into what they were doing. But I soon realised it wasn't right for me. I wasn't enjoying playing with them.

The early 70s seemed to be a restless era for you. Were you searching for something?

Oh, I knew what I wanted to do and that was to write songs with strong melodies. I wouldn't pretend that I was in Burt Bacharach's class, but I knew I had the talent to compose tuneful material, and it was just a case of finding the right outlet.

Back you went to Caravan in 1973. You did three albums

with them, before quitting once more. What persuaded you to leave this time?
Pye asked me to rejoin and I was working on building sites at the time and really missed being in a band, so I jumped at the chance. For a while it was all going well and everything was very positive. When I came back, I was given the choice of either getting session fees for everything I did, or taking royalties. As I was desperate for money, I went for the former. But it was all above board – I made the choice and didn't regret it.

But it started to go wrong when we found out our management hadn't been paying our taxes or VAT. It left us owing a lot of money. I took advice from a lawyer who told me to leave the band, take a year off and not do anything. So, that's what I did. I got letters for a long time afterwards about how much I owed as my part of the debt, but I don't believe I should ever have been saddled with any part of this. But I'm sure Pye still feels I landed him in it.

> I hope there will be another opportunity for me to return to Caravan. But that's out of my hands – Pye is the bandleader, so it's down to what he wants and I respect that.

You worked on a solo album for two years from 1975. Why didn't this go anywhere?
I had a lot of songs ready for this album, and Jeremy Darby, a friend of mine who worked at the Gulbenkian Theatre in Canterbury, persuaded me to record these there. We did this at night; he had the keys so we could sneak in, and he also had the keys to the bar!

I played everything on these recordings myself, and got 16 songs done that way. I then went up to London to try and get a record contract. But this was the end of 1976 and punk had come in, so nobody was interested. So I decided to put together a band and do five more tracks with them. By the time this was all done, it was early 1977 and punk had taken even more of a grip, and yet again all I got were rejections. These demos were finally released in 1993, as *Moon Over Man,* by Voiceprint.

Moon Over Man collection, 1993.

At the end of the 70s you returned to Caravan again. What was it like this time?
It was a little strange. They already had Jan Schelhaas on keyboards, so when I came back, this was now a band with two keyboard players. I always thought Pye wanted a guitar-oriented line-up, and now we had one dominated by keyboards. But we made it work.

You were also involved with Camel between 1978 and '79. Was this only ever supposed to be a temporary situation?
No, I was brought in for their world tour. Richard Sinclair was in Camel at the time and recommended me to take over from Pete Bardens. I don't actually think Andy Latimer knew who I was. But it all went very well, and we even played in Japan, which was my first visit and that's what started me thinking about moving there.

Andy Latimer must have been impressed, because later he did ask me to join Camel full-time. But I politely declined.

How did you feel about the original Caravan line-up reuniting for 1982's *Back To Front* album?
It was wonderful. For me the magic in Caravan was always about those first three albums and what we did together. It was still there when we did *Back To Front*.

You opened a piano shop in Herne Bay during 1982 called Avenue Pianos. It lasted 23 years. Did you enjoy doing this?
It was a way of escaping from the stress and pressure of being in a band. I also became a courier for a while, taking bands' tapes from one studio to another in London. It's also the reason Robert Wyatt became a postman for a time.

To help finance the shop, I sold a massive collection of guns and swords that I'd collected since

On key: Dave playing with Caravan in the late 70s.

PRESS/CARAVAN ARCHIVES

I was a child. I got £700 for this and was probably ripped off.

I also learnt so much about pianos from owning the shop. However, for a period I couldn't afford to hire staff, so had to move the pianos myself. This has left me with a twisted spine and the pain is with me every day.

Throughout the 90s and up to 2002 you had an on-off relationship with Caravan. What was it about that group that constantly drew you back into this fractious situation?

It was because most of the time I enjoyed playing with the guys. And I have a lot of fine memories from the latter days. But eventually it all went badly wrong — let's just say that by 2002 the situation was an accident waiting to happen.

You finally got to release a solo album in 2003, called *Full Circle*. Did doing that give you a sense of fulfilment?

Definitely. It was with such a feeling of relief that I finally got this out, but it took a massive toll on me financially and healthwise. For a while I was very ill with pneumonia and pleurisy, and was also really depressed. I thought I would die. In fact, when I started recording *Full Circle*, I couldn't use two of my fingers and can still hear the mistakes I made because of this.

Caravan's Back To Front, 1982.

I paid for everything myself as that way I was in control. I had to sell my house, take out a £5,000 loan, and was left flat broke. It also cost me my marriage. But at the end of it not only did I have this album but also a second album called *Into The Sun*, which also came out in 2003.

What made you relocate to Japan in 2005?

Partly this was because I had nothing left, and there were people in Japan prepared to sponsor and help me out. And also from the time I had gone to Japan with Camel I found the place fascinating.

My interest in the country, though, goes back to those early days with Caravan, when we lived in London. As I said earlier, it was Pye's sister's flat and one day this guy turned up who told us that Jane said he could also stay there for a time. Now, we had no money to buy food, but he had this huge box of Japanese food and agreed that if Pye and I would cook this for him, then we could share it. Of course, the two of us quickly found out how you did cook this Japanese stuff, and then we realised that not only was it much healthier than English cuisine, which I haver never liked anyway, but also got us stoned! Now that was an unexpected bonus, as we couldn't afford to buy hash. This was what initially got me intrigued by Japan — any country where you could get high from eating normally has got to be worth exploring!

Big in Japan: Sinclair's first live performance after moving to Yuge Island was headlining a festival at Yuge Shrine on July 31, 2021.

COURTESY OF DAVE SINCLAIR/ KAMIJIMA TOWN

Would you say you're quite a difficult person to work with?

I used to be a little difficult, I'll admit that, but these days that's not the case. I reckon that age has mellowed me a lot, as it does for most people. So now I am a lot more relaxed about things and don't allow it to get me down, but if I've written a piece of music then I know how it should sound when others come to play it. Of course, I accept there will always be room for individual interpretations, but it has to be within parameters which I find satisfying.

Going solo with Full Circle in 2003.

Now, my cousin Richard — he was the truly difficult one and I'm not sure that's changed.

You've had a chequered relationship over five decades with Pye Hastings. Can you see yourself getting involved with him and Caravan one last time?

I don't even have to think about that, I would love to do it. I have always been an admirer of Pye as a guitarist and also as a songwriter — he comes up with some great riffs. I also think they have an excellent drummer now in Mark Walker... that's not to say Richard Coughlan was anything other than a great drummer himself and a crucial part of what made Caravan happen in the first place. But I do love what Mark does.

And then there's Geoffrey Richardson, who's such a live wire onstage and a real personality — he's someone I enjoy performing with. I hope there will be another opportunity for me to return. But that's out of my hands. Pye is the bandleader, so it's down to what he wants and I respect that.

Your current album, *Hook-Line & Sinclair*, features old Canterbury pals Pye Hastings, Richard Sinclair, Robert Wyatt and even the late Richard Coughlan, plus a lot of ideas and recordings which are quite old. So, is this album a case of clearing out the cupboard?

I suppose it is. These are songs which represent my journey through life in recent years. And the way that I've been inspired to write about so many different things, and also about people. I love writing about people more than anything else.

A few of the songs here are about my wife Yammy, and I must have written seven or eight songs about her over the last few albums. But if you think about it, that wasn't unusual for the great classical composers, as a lot had muses, so I'm just keeping this tradition going.

Would you rather be known as a musician or as a songwriter?

As a writer. I like to think that I had a unique, unusual sound when I started out with Caravan and I'm grateful when this is recognised. But to be able to construct a song is such a wonderful thing and that's what has always been what gives me the most satisfaction. I've never come anywhere near Sir Paul McCartney, but like him if I am remembered for anything then I hope it'll be for my songs.

Hook-Line & Sinclair is out on Dsincs-Music. See www.dsincs-music.com for more information.

Edited by Dave Everley
prog.reviews@futurenet.com

New spins...

RUSH

A stellar unreleased live set, toy cars and reimagined artwork? The Canadian trio's 1981 masterpiece gets the reissue treatment.

Words: Dave Everley **Illustration:** Kevin February

Rush's *Snakes & Arrows* in 2007 featured the greatest in-concert film ever. Created by *South Park* geniuses Matt Stone and Trey Parker, the minute-long clip saw the four potty-mouthed kids from the animated TV show rehearsing the Canadian trio's 1981 single *Tom Sawyer* in their guise as Lil' Rush. After some amusing bickering over the lyrics ("I am Geddy Lee and I will sing whatever lyrics I want!"), they eventually launched into it properly... at which point it instantly, and brilliantly, segued into the real-life Rush playing the same song on the stage, in front of the audience, in the flesh.

It's telling that Parker and Stone picked *Tom Sawyer*. That it's a solid-gold classic is undeniable, but it also kicked off the album that stands as Rush's greatest pivot point — one that bridged their old school progressive past and their slick, mainstream-adjacent future. As this lavish 40th anniversary reissue shows, it's not only their most complete album, but also their most significant.

The previous year's *Permanent Waves* had scaled back the lengthy epics, and even spawned a hit single in *The Spirit Of Radio*, but it was still a recognisable 'prog' record, musically and lyrically. *Moving Pictures* was no less complex, but it presented a Rush that was fully ready for the oncoming decade.

The keyboards that had become a prominent part of their armoury were shoved front and centre here. The first sound on the album is the fuzzed-out wall of synths that introduces *Tom Sawyer*. Elsewhere, the perpetually-in-motion *The Camera Eye* — at 11 minutes, the closest this album comes to an old-school Rush epic, in length if not construction — is punctuated with washes, squelches and jabs of electronic noise.

Lyrically, too, it marked a shift for Neil Peart, with the drummer largely dispensing with allegorical tales of futuristic civilisations and Greek myths. The exception is the *Top Gear*-goes-sci-fi parable *Red Barchetta*,

Moving Pictures

UMC/VIRGIN EMI

> **It bridged their prog past and their mainstream-adjacent future.**

whose music conveys the exhilaration of an illicit car ride more convincingly than its hokey lyrics. Conversely, *Limelight* is the drummer at his finest and most revealingly personal. *'I can't pretend a stranger is a long-awaited friend,'* sings Peart proxy Geddy Lee, bringing his bandmate's well-documented social discomfort to life.

Moving Pictures is impressively front-loaded, to the point where its stellar back end often gets overlooked. *Witch Hunt (Part III Of Fear)* remains one of the darkest things they recorded. Even better is closing track *Vital Signs*, whose relentless electronic pulse and Police-esque white reggae vibe seeded the DNA for *Signals a*nd beyond.

For all that, *Moving Pictures*' legacy was assured a long time ago, so the question is: what does this reissue offer? The answer, at least for anyone with a hefty chunk of money to throw down on the super-deluxe edition, is a 44-page photo book, a pair of Neil Peart-branded drum sticks, all manner of posters and pin badges plus a model Red Barchetta car on a stand.

Thankfully, there are less wallet-emptying versions containing the proper gold, specifically *Live In YYZ*: an unreleased set recorded at a hometown show in Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens on March 25, 1981, two days before the bulk of the same year's *Exit... Stage Left* album was captured in Montreal.

This later recording trumps its illustrious predecessor on pretty much every level. Running to over two hours, and featuring the full setlist in its original order, it's a clearer representation of Rush in full flight than the patched-together *...Stage Left*. Sonically, too, everything about it is brighter and punchier, not least Geddy Lee's pithy between-song links. Best of all are the unexpected and unheard musical twists, such as the brief reggae-fied version of *Working Man* that leads off the early-70s medley towards the end of the set. Why this show has never officially been released before, only By-Tor knows.

While what is on this reissue is unimpeachably tremendous, there's the perpetual question of what isn't. Rush have always been parsimonious with their outtakes, mainly because they always claimed there weren't any. Still, there must be rough sketches and alternate takes lying around the vaults somewhere. As men of (musical) science, they must be aware that their workings are as crucial as the result. If ever a band could do with pulling back the curtain occasionally, it's them.

All that must remain a Rush devotee's fantasy. What this latest edition of this landmark does offer, via that stellar live recording, is enough to keep all but the most demanding fan happy. It might not add anything significant to *Moving Pictures*' legacy, but it does give it a good polish.

RU5H

COHEED AND CAMBRIA

Vaxis II: A Window On The Waking Mind ROADRUNNER

New York alt-proggers head back to familiar territory on ninth album.

Coheed And Cambria's Claudio Sanchez has spent more than two decades building an ambitious mythology based around The Amory Wars saga, his series of interlocking comic books and novels that have provided the basis for eight of the band's nine albums. *Vaxis II: A Window On The Waking Mind* sees these singular denizens of Nyack, New York picking up the story established on 2018's *Vaxis — Act I: The Unheavenly Creature*.

> **There's a glut of irresistibly catchy choruses throughout.**

Throughout their career, the band have had one foot in the world of alt-rock/emo, and another in the prog sphere. *Vaxis: Act I* and that album's non-conceptual predecessor *The Color Before The Sun* dialled the grandiosity back in favour of a more straightforward approach. This time, the needle moves closer to the more ambitious approach of old, even if no one is going to confuse Coheed And Cambria for Gentle Giant.

Prior knowledge of the helium-voiced Sanchez's over-arching narrative isn't mandatory, though knowing the storyline undoubtedly adds another dimension. As is customary with C&C albums, brief opener *The Embers Of Fire*'s deceptively delicate initial bars bloom into a portentous, quasi-classical overture — all big orchestral synths, marching percussion and faux-choral refrains — which suitably sets up the by turns clipped guitars and enormous, soaring choruses of *Beautiful Losers*. In fact, there is a glut of chest-beating, expansive, yet irresistibly catchy choruses throughout the album — *Comatose*, *Love Murder One* and the super-charged urgent pop-rock of *The Liar's Club* being prime examples.

Wider influences come into play on *Bad Man*, with its ultra-modern patina, forming an amalgam of electronic pop and rock that brings to mind the groundbreaking work of Simon Godfrey's debut Shineback album. Tricksy prog metal tropes haven't disappeared completely either as evidenced by the start/stop riffing, changes of dynamic and tempo, hefty drumming and guitar interplay across both *Ladders Of Supremacy* and *Rise, Naianasha (Cut The Cord)*. The real shot of prog comes with the concluding track, a shapeshifting, multipart mini-epic that revisits many of the album's many facets, from the gently lyrical to the crushingly heavy, from desperate sincerity to a high-kicking shuffle, before taking us back to where we started with an orchestral coda.

Vaxis II won't convert the doubters — moments of the album are unashamedly slick and chart-friendly. But few modern rock bands are as inventive within that framework as Coheed And Cambria, and fewer still feel like they're doing whatever the hell they want, irrespective of what anyone else thinks. And that's the mark of a great band.

GARY MACKENZIE

CHURCH OF THE COSMIC SKULL

There Is No Time SEPTAPHONIC RECORDS

More songs of praise from East Midlands weirdbeards.

Church Of The Cosmic Skull put the 'cult' in cult band. With their white suits and flowing robes, the Nottingham seven-piece look like they should be holed up in a desert compound, eyes fixed to the sky in readiness for the next UFO ride out of here. *'One more step, you'll be stepping on board,'* sings mastermind Bill Fisher lugubriously amid the sawing violins and harmonies of *One More Step*.

As far as shticks go, it's a good one, even if the only spaceships in COTCS' world are the ones on the covers of the old ELO records they've been listening to. Their fourth album plugs into that strain of prog-adjacent 70s rock, though their take owes more to the maverick weirdness of Roy Wood than Jeff Lynne's Beatles pastiches. There are traces, too, of prime Queen, early Deep Purple, String Driven Thing and, on *Valleys And Hills Pt 1 – Peel Away The Layers*, Hawkwind's grease-monkey motorik.

If it's murkier and darker than 2020's *Everybody's Going To Die*, that's understandable: a global pandemic and humanity's impending collapse will have that effect. All the more reason to down the Kool Aid and hop aboard the next spaceship home. **DEV**

GREENSLADE AND THOMAS

G&T ANGEL AIR

Affable union of two men old enough to know better.

Blues veteran David Thomas and keyboard legend Dave Greenslade play large on their initials on the cover of their first collaborative album, which depicts a lemon wedge plopping into a glass of gin and tonic. *G&T* is easy going rather than splashy: moving between blues, ballads and hints of prog, it boasts a seasoned band and some well-written material. Thomas has a fine, pure voice, and, although easy to forget by the size of his cuffs in the 70s, Greenslade had been a leading R&B player in the previous decade with Chris Farlowe And The Thunderbirds and Geno Washington.

There's not a huge amount for Greenslade fans to savour here as he's very much a team player, but there are a couple of signature moments, not least when Greenslade fully opens up and delivers a stunning Hammond solo on *Late Coming Love*, a duet between Thomas and Dana Gillespie.

Elsewhere, *One More Time* is an anthemic show closer, with an eye on Fairport's *Meet On The Ledge* and *Afterglow* by Genesis. When the Gillespie-led backing vocals come in, *G&T* becomes a full fruity bucket of botanicals from a funky pub rather than the staid ice-and-a-slice of the local. **DE**

DIVIDED BY DESIGN

Irretraceable Steps DBDOFFICIAL.BANDCAMP.COM

Shapeshifting instrumental trio raise their game on second album.

Divided By Design made a subtle stamp on a crowded instrumental rock scene in 2020 with their debut album *Stages To Osiris*, but the Leeds trio have bigger things in mind second time around. *Irretraceable Steps* refines their songwriting and production, and it's a sound reliant on tricky interplay and fluid leads giving colour to the math rock tapestry.

With the album devoid of a unique selling point, this isn't going to scoop any end of year awards, but there are a few gems among the eight-strong tracklist. *The Fine Line* advances confidently into Dream Theater-esque fretplay, shimmering keys and strident snare shots, while *N2H4* juggles power-metal gusto and Liam Stephenson's succulent guitar work, all married to keyboard programming.

For all their deviances to the darker corners of rock, Divided By Design are hell bent on giving melody a crack. Album finale *Inhibitor,* for instance, offers a galloping, guillotine-sharp lead fit for a swashbuckling game soundtrack, while *DAVE* encapsulates just why this threesome are on the right track – a groovy underbelly with memorable top lines that yearn in all the right ways. **CC**

EVERGREY

A Heartless Portrait (The Orphean Testament) NAPALM

More epic melodrama from Sweden's heaviest hearts.

Barely a year after the release of *Escape Of The Phoenix*, Evergrey are ready to put us through the emotional wringer all over again. The Swedish power prog outfit have been in devastating form since 2014's *Hymns For The Broken*, as their blend of cutting edge, heavier-than-Metallica riffing and frontman Tom S Englund's unerringly heartfelt and heart-rending melodies slipped into a higher gear.

To some extent, *A Heartless Portrait* is more of the same, but there are plenty of subtle embellishments that mark these songs out as distinctive in their own right. *Save Us* is the perfect, bombastic opener, with a skyscraper-levelling chorus and, as ever, startling levels of heaviness. Darkly symphonic and laced with ghostly backing choirs, *Midwinter Calls* is as fine a song as Englund has ever written, but there are several equally dazzling moments elsewhere. *Reawakening* is Evergrey in opulent AOR mode, but with fidgeting electronics providing the dynamic glue; *The Great Unwashed* is a slow-burning prog metal epic, up to its neck in pathos. It ends with *Wildfires*, the kind of tender, crestfallen ballad at which Englund excels. Not a dry eye in the house, guaranteed. **DL**

GABRIEL KELLER

Clair Obscur GABRIELKELLER.BANDCAMP.COM

French guitarist mixes melancholic moods and prog metal.

Gabriel Keller crafts elegant, melancholic prog rock on his debut album. Although he names The Beatles and Pink Floyd among his influences, *Clair Obscur* feels closest in spirit and sound to another acknowledged inspiration, Porcupine Tree.

Four different singers – Emi B, Charlotte Gagnor, Maïté Merlin, and Marine Poirier – all handle the lead vocals, avoiding the common pitfall of the prog solo songwriter who can't carry a tune. The opening songs set a sombre mood, with the reflective vibe of *Time*, *Train To Resolution* and *Open Arms*. These tracks wear their prog influences lightly, but there's a maturity and sophistication to the writing and arrangements that's immediately appealing.

Keller displays his full range as the album unfolds. *Melancholia* is disarmingly charming, with a superb vocal by Gangor. The expansive *Sonate Au Clair Obscur* gives flight to Keller's progressive inclinations with its orchestral strings, odd measures and hefty riffing, and *Nothing Human*, the album's heaviest cut, crafts a dark, menacing mood.

An accomplished, impressive debut from one of the French prog scene's bright new prospects. **DW**

GURU GURU

Made In Switzerland – Official Bootleg GURUGURU1.BANDCAMP.COM

Veteran krautrockers captured live in Zofingen in late 2021.

Perhaps it's rude to mention a gentleman's age, but it is extraordinary that Guru Guru drummer and vocalist Mani Neumeier is still going strong at 81. His band might not be the most celebrated krautrock group, but they are the longest lived, having formed in Heidelberg in 1968, a time of acid, insurrection and communal living.

Fifty three years on, this album was recorded to celebrate the arrival of Zeus B Held on keyboards, who weaves subtle lines into the songs and adds some flamboyant synth in places. There is little of the mayhem of Guru Guru's drug-fuelled early music like *Der LSD March*, but they do play *Ooga Booga* from 1972's *Känguru* and, with his lyrics, Neumeier delivers an idiosyncratic critique of modern society. On *Living In The Woods* he goes back to nature, singing, *'I'm a drumming man I've got rhythm/I'm a forest man living in the woods'* and on *Space Baby* he plays the part of an alien visiting our *'fucked-up planet'* inviting us to *'the planet of love'*. But there's a good-humoured party atmosphere running throughout the album, which culminates in the boisterous, straight ahead *Rock'n'Roll Machine*. Long may it continue. **MB**

FISH

The Last Straw – Live In Glasgow 2018 CHOCOLATE FROG

Beautifully packaged document of two live shows from 2018.

To say that Fish has endured a trying five years is an understatement of Olympian magnitude. The planning and execution of his farewell album, the extraordinary *Weltschmerz*, was hampered by a litany of obstacles: surgery, self-doubt, age- and health-related complications, political developments and, worst of all, the loss of his beloved father and an ailing mother being moved into permanent care – and that's *before* Covid-19 cast its looming shadow, and it's something that continues to exert a frustrating influence over the big Scotsman's last tour.

> **It details a trying, yet ultimately rewarding time.**

This triple-disc live album, featuring two audio CDs recorded at the Glasgow Academy in 2018, plus a DVD shot four months earlier at the Cropredy Festival, details a trying, yet ultimately rewarding time in the singer-songwriter's life. Across almost 11,000 words, a less-than-pocket-sized sleeve essay offers a chronology of the issues he faced in getting the show back on the road. From the firing of former It Bites keyboardist John Beck to multiple illnesses and production complications, it's a travelogue of woe. Never one to hide behind excuses, Fish also volunteers the reasons for lowering the keys of his songs, also that on occasion he was guilty of failing to warm up adequately for the set's opening number, Marillion's *Slàinte Mhath*.

With both of those facts apparent here, it's a relief. However, the latter is a temporary blip. Warmed up, Fish's voice sounds perfectly fine, and those tuning alterations are equally forgivable for a man attempting to reach notes he first sang 30 years ago. What is the alternative? Staying home and digging his garden?

In truth, there were surely times when Fish would prefer to have done the latter, but when he performs it's impossible to ignore the joie de vivre brought forth by the final in-the-entirety performances of his swansong album with Marillion, 1987's *Clutching At Straws*, plus still-developing embryos of four tracks from *Weltschmerz*. When the broody and hypnotic *Man With A Stick* pops up two songs in, and after Glasgow has gone apeshit to the *Clutching...* mini-set of *Hotel Hobbies*, *Warm Wet Circles* and *That Time Of The Night*, another newie-at-the-time, the deliciously sparse *Little Man What Now*, is spiced up by backing singer Doris Brendel, confirming this show as something rather special.

And so it proves. Despite its own drama of Fish bursting a blood vessel in a haemorrhoid onstage, unwittingly staining his light grey jeans, the DVD segment represents laudable documentation of the twilight years of Derek William Dick as a live performer.

DAVE LING

KAPREKAR'S CONSTANT

The Murder Wall TALKING ELEPHANT

Kent collective at the peak of their powers on album three.

Few bands spin a yarn like Kaprekar's Constant. Their 2017 debut, *Fate Outsmarts Desire*, and its follow-up, *Depth Of Field*, showed the core duo of Al Nicholson and Nick Jefferson to be skilled storytellers, songwriters and performers, with a taste for history and an evocative way with a lyric. With Van der Graaf sax player David Jackson onboard, and Ian Anderson supplying some spoken word on album two, their prog credentials were assured.

> **Another inspired, crafted record from this pedigree outfit.**

Presented as a continuous, 75-minute piece of music, the septet's third outing draws on real-life stories of intrepid mountaineers who have taken on the north face of the Eiger, a deadly climb known as 'The Murder Wall'. Some succeeded, many died trying. *Prologue* sets up the story, with a catchy, not-that-jolly refrain of *'Death stalks them all up on the murder wall'*, and the band are on anthemic form from the off.

Nicholson's warm, characterful voice makes him an assured narrator here and on *Tall Tales By Firelight*, a vivid recounting of two German climbers' doomed ascent. He and co-singer Dorie (daughter of David) Jackson make a great pairing — she excels on the sad, piano-led *Failure Takes Care Of Its Own (A carpet of ice cushions stuck to the wall/Frosted victims stuck to the wall')* and the frigidly atmospheric *The Stormkeeper's Daughter*.

The Murder Wall's song frameworks are familiar and traditional, ripe with prog, folk and 80s pop inflections. They're elevated by KC's way with detail, arrangement and orchestration. Gorgeous guitars and woodwinds colour *Another Man's Smile*'s reflections on the human cost of such dangerous endeavours against their place in history and the popular imagination. Mark Walker's drums, Jefferson's bass, and the rafts of vocal harmonies are given punch by Mike Westergaard's clear, defined production and mix.

The band are in full flight on the stirring *Victorious* and *Third Man Down*, and whether he's on sax, flute or whistle David Jackson's tasteful playing adds instant class. Judie Tzuke's lovely vocal cameo on the brief, mournful *Years To Perfect* is a bonus, *A World Beyond Man* has real sweep, while *A Silent Drum* is a beautifully written father-to-son moment. Nicholson and Jefferson's lyrical smarts abound, as on highlight *Hope In Hell*, a poignant evocation of the moment when, high up on that mountain and *'reaching up with Venus De Milo arms'*, all is lost.

The triumphant, theme-recapping *Hall Of Mirrors* closes another inspired, crafted record from this pedigree outfit. *The Murder Wall* is filled with love, care, drama and great music, as Kaprekar's Constant scale new heights of their own.

GRANT MOON

HÄLLAS

Isle Of Wisdom NAPALM

Prog-psych nirvana from Sweden's retro masters.

When Hällas emerged with their debut, *Excerpts From A Future Past*, in 2018, it sounded like the Swedes had been hibernating in mothballs since 1971. Plenty of bands plunder the sounds of that cherished era, but few do it with such conviction.

Their third full-length, *Isle Of Wisdom* outstrips its predecessors by some margin, as Hällas go the whole prog hog and end up sounding even more like a band beamed in from five decades ago. No retro stone is left uncovered, with billowing waves of synth and Mellotron and tumultuous arrangements straight out of the Museo Rosenbach handbook, but the strength of these songs ensures that *Isle Of Wisdom* never sounds like a pastiche. *Advent Of Dawn* is a straightforwardly great, folk-tinged rock song; *The Inner Chamber* is half beautifully paced ballad, half Camel-esque instrumental freakout; *Gallivants Of Space* begins with its foot on the monitor before slipping seamlessly into bucolic, lysergic reverie. With fabulous cover art and unerringly poetic lyrics (*'The unsullied land shall shiver in fear as the angels pour down their wrath...'* is quite the opening line), *Isle Of Wisdom* really will scratch anyone's prog-psych itch. **DL**

KIRK HAMMETT

Portals BLACKENED RECORDINGS

Metallica axeman shows unexpected side on solo debut EP.

Metallica aren't prog, but their guitarist's solo debut ticks quite a few of the boxes. *Portals* began life in 2017, when Kirk Hammett composed music for an exhibit of his huge horror move memorabilia collection. Drawing on classical and soundtrack music, he expanded on the idea, teaming up with composer/orchestrator Edwin Outwater for this conceptual, 'audio cinematic' EP, which works well.

The four tracks here each represent an era of horror cinema. *Maiden And The Monster* celebrates the age of *Nosferatu*, *Frankenstein* et al, its central riff lumbering ominously as strings swell around and drums boom beneath. Marking the 50s' *Plan 9 From Outer Space*-type schlock, *The Jinn* comes with urgent cellos and a groove, like Pink Floyd's *One Of These Days* only a few BPMs slower. Taking the concept into the 60s, the mystical *High Plains Drifter* has a spaghetti western vibe, while *The Incantation* builds from a mournful horn line into a colossal orchestral piece, with some Zappa-esque electric sitar to boot.

Hammett's made his fortune using one facet of his talent, but this opulent, widescreen work proves there's more to him. *And* he's a Tull fan... **GRM**

HIGH PULP

Pursuit Of Ends ANTI- RECORDS

Fabulous jazz fusion from virtuoso US combo.

On their second album, instrumental jazz collective, High Pulp utilise their very obvious virtuosity and influences as wide ranging as hip hop, 80s electronica and classic be-bop. The result makes for deceptive listening.

On one level there are gorgeous, melodic tunes and hip vibes – see the uber-cool *Blaming Mercury* or the bubbling, head-nodding groove of *Kamishinjo* – there's very little here that's ugly, discordant or wantonly aggressive. Listen closer, however, and different layers present themselves – the bewildering polyrhythms of *Ceremony*, where the drums hammer out a hypnotic pattern in fives, yet most of the other instrumentation appears to be in a totally different meter.

Playing around with odd times yet making things sound slick and effortless is a trick repeated in *Inner Crooner* and with the other-worldly swirling harp and horns of *Wax Hands*. Elsewhere, ideas are built upon each other creating almost cinematic patchworks of sound in A *Ring On Each Finger* and the intensity builds. *Window To A Shimmering World* culminates in a keyboard wig-out worthy of Keith Emerson. The epitome of cool modern jazz with depth and complexity. **GMM**

KALANDRA

Kingdom Two Crowns: Norse Lands Soundtrack BY NORSE

Norwegian art-rockers expand their horizons with immersive sound tapestries.

With debut album *The Line*, Kalandra established a reputation for evocative neo-folk, haunting alt-pop and atmospheric art-rock conflations. This follow-up was originally composed as a soundtrack to the second in the *Kingdom Two Crowns* computer game series, but the band have reworked and edited the music for this standalone album release.

There are no actual songs here – this is music as aural painting. Tracks such as *Eikthyrnir* and *Drømmefanger* are built upon lush, unhurried swathes of sound, while *Valkyrja* adds an almost sacred, hymn-like quality. Only slightly more emphatic is the material that draws more heavily on Scandinavian and celtic folk influences like the near-jaunty woodwind and drum beat of *Skogtroll* or the increasingly exultant *Helheim*, which builds to the album's climax.

Divorced from its original video game context, the music allows for myriad interpretations. The use of traditional instruments like the hurdy-gurdy and moraharpa only add to the impression of mythical realms where seasons progress at a more staid pace and the spirits of Earth, people and elements are somehow closer. **GMM**

KITE PARADE

The Way Home WHITE KNIGHT RECORDS

Ex-Grenadier Guards bandsman enlists distinguished cast for debut album.

Kite Parade is a project by Andy Foster, previously the saxophonist in a military band. On this, his first album, his musical cohorts include drummers Nick D'Virgilio of Big Big Train and Wishbone Ash's Joe Crabtree, while BBT/IQ sound engineer Rob Aubrey oversees the mixing and mastering.

Foster's strong, tuneful voice drives opener *Letting Go*, a pulsating power-prog anthem full of infectious hook lines. The lush melodies of *The Way Home* aligns musically with the art-pop sensibilities of It Bites and Kino, while there's an upbeat tone to *This Time*, with Foster breaking out his sax for a fluid solo. *Strip The Wall* is a darker proposition, its guitars going full tilt, and domestic abuse is covered in *Suffer No Longer*, although its sympathetic tone is enhanced by a gentle acoustic vibe. The dramatic *Going Under* tackles drug addiction, Foster's staccato vocals sending out shockwaves as he sings *'stop shaking'*.

The title track features lyrics from prog maverick Steve Thorne, while *Stranded* is a song of two halves, the atmospheric first passage contrasting with the metronomic beat underpinning the later vocal line. Military music's loss is prog's gain. **AR**

LAIBACH

Wir Sind Das Volk: Ein Musical Aus Deutschland MUTE

East European provocateurs lay down their latest aural challenge.

Since first traumatising listeners with pounding, militaristic 1985 debut single *Die Liebe*, the Slovenian experimentalists have subsequently subjected us to bizarre covers (of Queen's *One Vision*, The Beatles' *Let It Be* album, *The Sound Of Music*), an uncomfortable obsession with North Korea, camp machismo, totalitarian iconography... Hell's teeth, they've even worn antlers.

Three and a half decades on, *Wir Sind Das Volk* soundtracks an avant-garde stage musical based on the work of dissident playwright and poet Heiner Müller. Wagnerian in scale, sometimes spoken word (auf Deutsch, offensichtlich), at times instrumental, ostentatiously symphonic and keyboard-led, it's so post-rock that it's barely rock at all.

Familiar Laibach tropes are rare. Singer Milan Fras' disturbing basso profundo vocal, here set against *Der Vater*'s jarring Varèse-recalling jolts, is almost all that remains of their industrial heyday. A lengthy, live *Herakles 2 Oder Die Hydra* is uneasy listening incarnate: sub-*Low*-era Bowie ambience smothered in incomprehensible German language ranting. File under 'challenging'. **IF**

MESHUGGAH

Immutable ATOMIC FIRE

Prog metallers deliver their most avant-garde slab of noise in years.

Meshuggah have been the leaders of the extreme prog metal pack for close to three decades – the Swedes long ago formulated their own harsh breed of experimentation. Tomas Haake's drumming transformed them into a polyrhythmic juggernaut, while guitarists Fredrik Thordendal and Mårten Hagström peddled wonky seven- and eight-string metal riffs. Their influence has spread across a generation of bands that followed, from TesseracT to Haken.

> **Its prog deviations make it more diverse than its predecessors.**

Immutable is their ninth full-length album, so the Meshuggah brand of violent innovation's long been established. As a result, there's still mountains of prog metal to overcome across these 63 minutes. Frontman Jens Kidman roars like a revving engine and the guitars have once again been tuned subterraneously low. Plus, Haake has inhuman stamina; he maintains his lightning-fast, multifaceted playing for entire songs without any interruption.

All of that said, there are lulls throughout, which those more fascinated with the avant-garde than the brutal can appreciate on this album. One of them, conveniently, is the opening track, *Broken Cog*. It may commence with thunderous guitars and drums, but the alien time signature summarises Meshuggah's technical expertise. Moreover, Kidman's usual growls take a backseat, as whispers sing over grinding lead guitar licks. It's a masterclass in slow-building songwriting.

Even better is the album's centrepiece, *They Move Below*, a 10-minute instrumental that completely upends the Meshuggah formula. Clean guitars slowly escalate at the song's outset, before slipping into a slow, distorted crawl. Thordendal even indulges in some melodic solos as the rhythms twitch and evolve. *Black Cathedral* tests the guitarist's boundaries as well, emphasising tremolo picking in a two-minute interlude that lacks percussion altogether.

Entering via these more outwardly prog avenues, it's easier to appreciate the prowess of what *Immutable* achieves as a whole. Beneath the V8-throated yells of Kidman on *The Abysmal Eye*, there's a meticulously crafted fusion of peerless drumming and vibrant lead guitar. With *Light The Shortening Fuse*, *Phantoms* and *Ligature Marks*, Meshuggah sculpt their own oppressive, mesmerising universe; it's a space that understandably can petrify people unaccustomed to this kind of extremity. Yet, at the same time, it's also the nucleus for much of the contemporary prog landscape.

Immutable captures Meshuggah as monolithic as ever, yet its unabashed prog deviations make it more diverse than its immediate predecessors. Whether an old or new fan, this late-game masterpiece is essential listening.

MATT MILLS

CARBON. STEEL. HEAVY METAL!

NOT YOUR AVERAGE...

CHARITY RIDE

The HEAVY METAL TrUaNts

OVER £1 MILLION RAISED SO FAR

MAY 30 - JUNE 10, 2022

JOIN US ONLINE OR ON THE ROAD!

HEAVYMETALTRUANTS.COM

The TrUaNts FOUNDATION

childline

Save the Children

NORDOFF ROBBINS Life-changing music

TEENAGE CANCER TRUST

LORDS OF FORM

Flying Chromium Society LORDSOFFORM.BANDCAMP.COM

Ex-Hawkwind bassist sets the controls for new adventures in space rock.

Envisaged by former Hawkwind man Niall Hone as a solo project, *Flying Chromium Society* developed into something more when Hone and collaborators Ross Fuller (guitar/vocals) and Jamie Gillett (drums) felt that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts, creating the collective Lords Of Form identity.

It's unsurprising that Hone's past bleeds through both in the music and in the striking, psychedelic cover art and graphics. *It's Revolution Time* and *The Electric White Highway* channel the fuzzed-up guitars and relentless headlong rush of songs like the Hawks' *Brainstorm* and *Levitation*. Elsewhere, there's a punk edge of self-righteous anger on *Tribes Collide* and *Little Victories*, and foreboding in the snarled, sludgy grind of *This Dying World*.

Hone and co intersperse these more upfront songs with short, synth-based instrumentals creating pools of ambience and space, like the musical box melodies of *Low Orbit*. Alongside the more obvious rock influences,they also weave in hints of world music, soundtracks, rap and electronica as evinced by the mostly instrumental *Anomalies*. A great addition to any space rock collection. **GMM**

OH HIROSHIMA

Myriad NAPALM

Post-rock duo return with a broader and fiercer fourth album.

As their name suggests, Sweden's Oh Hiroshima have always brought a magnificently apocalyptic edge to the post-rock landscape. *Myriad* is the best example yet of their approach, as it finds the band (now a duo) adding darkness and depth to the dazzling template of 2019's *Oscillation*.

Nour kicks things off with a harsh yet liberating mixture of feedback, vocals, rhythms and horns, placing equal doses of doom metal and baroque rock around its post-rock core. It's an imaginative introduction that fully sets the stage for what's to come. *Veil Of Certainty* sustains the same vibe but with a shade more melody and atmosphere, evoking The Pineapple Thief and Lunatic Soul, whereas *Humane* delves further into progressive rock levels of instrumental sophistication. Other tracks tap into similar foundations, yet some are comparatively peaceful – *Ascension* and dreamlike closer *Hidden Chamber* offer breaks from the chaos.

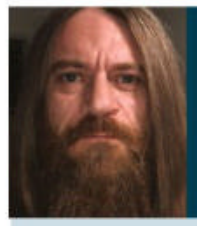
Like some albums within the post-rock field, parts of *Myriad* feel too samey, but that's never really an issue because Oh Hiroshima's emphasis on elegant orchestration and charismatic singing make even the most familiar moments meaningful. **JMB**

OKSANA LINDE

Aquatic And Other Worlds BUH RECORDS

Venezuela's answer to Delia Derbyshire releases debut album at 74.

While Venezuelan electronic music may not register too highly on people's 'must hear' lists, the story of 74-year-old Oksana Linde is almost the stuff that Hollywood movies are made of. Born in Caracas in 1948, Linde began making synthesiser-based music in her 30s and was part of a then-burgeoning local scene. For whatever reason, that music seems to have gone largely overlooked until discovered by Luis Alvarado of Buh Records, who has released this collection which dates from 1983 to 1989. Early electronic and synthesiser pioneers like Delia Derbyshire and Wendy Carlos are obvious reference points, but also Tangerine Dream, Klaus Schulze and, more recently, John Carpenter too. The likes of *Viaje Hacia La Luz*, *Orinoco* and *Recordando A Kitaro* bubble and throb away creating moods that would appeal to fans of any of the aforementioned musicians, while the uptempo and eclectic *Mariposas Acuaticas* shows a more playful side to Linde. As a window into another time, and indeed another continent, this is a fascinating and enjoyable release that begs the question: what other music is there from Linde? And can we hear it please? **JE**



PROGRESSIVE METAL

Dom Lawson buckles up for a delve into the darker, heavier side.

Heavy and weird times call for heavy and weird music, so strap yourselves in. **Without Waves**' third album, *Comedian* (Prosthetic), begins with a bewildering flurry of polyrhythmic riffs and bug-eyed screams, before mutating into a perverse amalgam of pitch-black post-rock and left-field electronics. Somehow, this Chicago quartet make it all sound entirely natural, and they sustain that suspension of musical logic throughout. Fans of Devin Townsend and Between The Buried And Me will revel in the scattershot riot of ideas that fuels more aggressive songs like *.algorithm* and *Sleight In Shadows*, while the melodic drift and hazy dynamics of *Day 15* and *Do What Scares You* offer sublime moments of woozy respite.

Cobra The Impaler are not quite as terrifying as their name suggests, but *Colossal Gods* (Listenable) is a debut of great distinction. There's a debt to Mastodon in the thunderous likes of *Demigods* and *Blood Eye*, but these Belgians have an eccentric streak that precludes them from sticking to the script. With powerful vocals, addictive melodic hooks and a seemingly endless supply of great riffs, it's hard to think of a reason *not* to get impaled.

The presence of Swallow The Sun vocalist Mikko Kotamäki should be all the reason anyone needs to check out **Kuolemanlaakso**'s new album, *Kuusumu* (Svart). Veterans of Finland's unerringly fruitful funeral doom scene, they draw inspiration from the epic poetry of Finnish legend Eino Leino and have a penchant for gothic grandeur and exquisite misery. Kotamäki is a commanding presence throughout and he brings his bruised humanity to bear on opulent, morbidly theatrical epics like the *Pimeys Laski* and wickedly pompous closer *Tulessakävelijä*.

With members of transcendental Romanian metal crew Negura Bunget in their ranks, **Dara Project** were never going to be a straightforward concern. The band's second album, *Se Glia Lua Nume* (Loud Rage), continues their all-encompassing approach, wherein stripped down post-metal and bullish, riff-driven space rock collide with cracked mirror jazz and angsty, brittle black metal. The mellifluous, reverb-soaked *Napasta* is a particularly mesmerising moment.

Blurring the lines between subgenres is standard practice in the metal underground, but **Messa** have turned their disregard for boundaries into a means to conjure real magic. The Italians' third album, *Close* (Svart), is a fervently progressive affair, with elements of drone, doom, psychedelic rock and post-punk woven together. From opener *Suspended*'s haunted doom riffs and mischievous jazz interludes to the bluesy, occult rush of closer *Serving Him*, Messa are a thoroughly unique proposition and *Close* is a momentous piece of work.

THE PINEAPPLE THIEF

Give It Back KSCOPE

Gavin Harrison puts his stamp on PT's early catalogue.

Robert Fripp once said that if you change the drummer, you change the band. Gavin Harrison, someone who should know a thing or three about Fripp's musical ideas from his years in King Crimson, seems determined to prove the truth of that philosophy. It was Fripp who told Harrison that he should approach every song like it's new, regardless of when it was first composed or recorded, which informs the concept behind *Give It Back*.

> **The older tunes move away from prog metal and towards art-rock.**

From playing on The Pineapple Thief's *Your Wilderness* in 2016 as a session musician, Harrison became a full member in time for 2018's *Dissolution*. Now he's had a dig through the group's vaults and, with the blessing of frontman Bruce Soord, picked 12 songs to rearrange and re-record, favouring the albums *Little Man* (2006), *Tightly Unwound* (2008) and *All The Wars* (2012), with a quick dip even further back into 2002's *One Three Seven* and 2005's *10 Stories Down*.

It will be a surprise to no one that the drums sound great on these new versions, something that's particularly noticeable on *Wretched Soul* and *One Three Seven* itself, both of which originally had rather clanging snares. Harrison's drum parts sound fuller, rounder, and warmer by comparison, although in the case of the track *Give It Back*, this sacrifices some of the bite of the 2012 recording.

The overall effect on the older tunes is to move them away from Porcupine Tree's prog metal and towards Radiohead's alternative art-rock, and that influence is unavoidably heightened by the vocal similarities between Bruce Soord and Thom Yorke. When Soord uses his falsetto upper register to emote, as he does in *Boxing Day*, he can sound uncannily like Yorke, with the same sense of yearning in his delivery. *Little Man* evokes *OK Computer* with its delicate guitar melody and breathy, almost ASMR-like vocal, even if this iteration of the tune has a beefier feel to it.

Harrison's updated arrangement reworks *Wretched Soul* quite dramatically, dialling down the noisy metal aggro — despite a brief but blistering explosion of double kick playing — for a vibe that feels like Muse if they had Toto's Jeff Porcaro laying down his signature halftime shuffle groove. *Shoot First* is a platform for Harrison's singularly articulate style and while the drums are never in any danger of overpowering the mix, they're certainly not sitting demurely at the back. Adding a marimba to *Build A World* gives the tune a new texture and while other songs, like *Someone Pull Me Out*, haven't travelled terribly far from their forebears, they all sound refreshed without sacrificing any of Soord's all-permeating melancholic moodiness.

DAVID WEST

PREHISTORIC ANIMALS

The Magical Mystery Machine (Chapter Two) GLASSVILLE RECORDS

Swedish prog metallers continue their quest to collect the essence of humanity.

The chugging guitars and anthemic choruses of *We Harvest The Souls Of The Brave* usher us back into the conceptual universe of protagonists Cora and Jareth, outlined on PreHistoric Animals' 2020 album, *The Magical Mystery Machine (Chapter One)*, and continues PreHistoric Animals' sci-fi concept.

As with that album, a mix of influences suggest themselves. The odd time signatures and hard edge of I *Am The Chosen One (And I Like It)* bring to mind Pain Of Salvation's back catalogue (guitarist Daniel Madgic was a former member of that band), while *Cora's New Secret* slows the intensity slightly, reminiscent of prime Queensrÿche. The low synth thrum at the start of *The Protectors Of The Universe* suggests space rock, but the track develops into electronic/doomy/pop-rock while *2100 (New Year's Eve)* has a whiff of James LaBrie in its vocal delivery.

Album closer *It's A Start, Not The End* combines Stefan Altzar's soaring vocals with more reflective passages and epic guitar soloing. The net result is accomplished prog metal with strong messages in praise of feminism and the need for all of us to guard our humanity. **GMM**

PSYCHEDELIC PORN CRUMPETS

Night Gnomes MARATHON ARTISTS

Australian space cadets are back with their best album yet.

It would be erroneous to think that a work rate of five albums in six years would suggest an easing off of the quality control pedal on the part of Psychedelic Porn Crumpets. Indeed, much like the third-eye experience that informs their name, the western Australian quintet process an incredible amount of information and influences that have included space rock, punk, prog and yes, psychedelia, to create a dense and frequently intense yet pleasurable experience. But while there's no change on that score, *Night Gnomes* proves to be their most cohesive and finest statement to date.

If their previous albums have skidded and spun in the most thrilling of manners, this is where the trip is deep and precise. The gradual and undulating pulses of opener *Terminus The Creator* are redolent of a rave that's just beginning to crank up as it ushers in the pile-driving *Lava Lamp Pisco*.

Elsewhere, the hypnotically gorgeous *Slinky Holy Water* is a direct descendant of King Crimson's first incarnation as Mellotron-like keyboards wash over snaking, twisting basslines. Crucially, a greater sense of melodicism underpins the entire album that creates focus in their aural kaleidoscope. **JM**

SEL BALAMIR

()rphans SELBALAMIR.BANDCAMP.COM

Cosmically enhanced introspection from Amplifier man.

Sel Balamir is in a reflective mood on his second solo release. Given the enforced insularity of the last two years, it makes sense that many artists have turned their gaze inwards, pondering life and loneliness, as the Amplifier frontman does here.

2021's *Swell* was a concept work about the ocean, written as Balamir recovered from Covid, and some of these tunes started life at the same time. Both albums move keys and piano closer to the forefront, although, unlike the undulating *Swell*, here there are moments touching on Amplifier's space rock. *Theme (From Crocodile Dundee)* is a cosmic guitar work-out and *Astral Womb* has a grungy riff and a trippy fuzz-laden solo.

With its steady pulse and washes of synthesiser, *Pink Bows* finds Balamir moving towards post-rock. *Don't Wear The Crown* builds so incrementally that the growth is almost imperceptible at first, with Balamir in no hurry to reach his destination. The lushly layered *Mannequin* has an intriguing contrast between the positivity of the lyrics and the melancholic minor key. An album that feels designed to reveal its pleasures gradually for those willing to unwind and enjoy the journey. **DW**

SNOWMAN

In A Better Place SNOWMANPROGROCK.BANDCAMP.COM

Portuguese proggers wear their influences proudly on their debut album.

Snowman did a great job of implementing the influences of Pink Floyd, Genesis, Porcupine Tree and Camel into an engaging experience on 2019's debut EP, *Inner Light*.

The Portuguese band's full-length follow-up expands upon that formula, resulting in a more sprawling yet accessible artistic statement. Instrumental opener *The Mysterious Vanishing Of Elisa Lam* channels the turmoil of the real-life disappearance behind its title in a mix of morose space rock with bursts of enraged guitar riffs and rhythms. It's an adventurous hodgepodge of temperaments and techniques, and the subsequent pieces do a fine job taking that pattern to interesting new places.

Harbour Of Sorrow leans toward the cosmic feistiness of IQ, while *Gratitude* puts an ethereal coating over the gentle guitar arpeggios and flutes. Both *The Broken Man* and *A Storm Coming* conjure the psychedelic aggression of Cosmograf while *To This* Day serves as the LP's most multifaceted composition.

In A Better Place is undeniably reminiscent of other bands, yet that rarely takes away from what is a captivating journey. **JMB**

THE CHEMISTRY SET

Pink Felt Trip FRUITS DE MER

A cornucopian concoction of contemporary psychedelia.

The Chemistry Set date back through many psychedelic revivals to the late 80s and their first album since 2016 occupies a timeless zone, sounding both ancient and modern.

The core duo of Paul Lake and Dave McLean play all the instruments, and the production, particularly the drum sound, is vivid and full of energy. The title track is, by the band's admission, somewhat indebted to early Captain Beefheart and that's evident in the searing lead guitar and ebullient bass. They deliver an impressive Mellotron-heavy cover of The Moody Blues' tripped-out *Legend Of A Mind*, and their own material is full of memorable tunes – with its yearning chorus and cheesy organ, *The Rubicon* sounds like the missing link between early Beatles and Question Mark and The Mysterians, while *Nice Cup Of Tea* evokes the tweeness of Blossom Toes.

But it's not all larking about and the album closes with the 11-minute suite *Self Expression Trinity*, which begins with dramatic Mellotron themes etched with bittersweet piano, dedicated to Spanish surrealist César Manrique, and concludes with a sinuous raga rock meditation on the redemptive power of love. **MB**

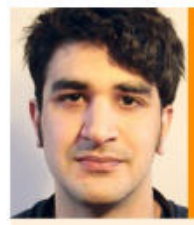
TIGER MOTH TALES

A Song of Spring WHITE KNIGHT RECORDS

Peter Jones continues his journey through the seasons.

Following 2017's *In The Depths Of Winter*, *A Song of Spring* is the second seasonally themed Tiger Moth Tales album from prog workaholic Peter Jones. He sings and plays all the instruments, including saxophone and ukulele, on the eight diverse, delightful new musical journeys. There's a rich seam of overt Big Big Train influences running through the joyful, life-affirming opener *Spring Fever*, inviting everyone to *'let the light inside and build your soul'*. Elsewhere, a Spanish guitar introduction belies the ensuing darkness of *Dance 'Til Death*, its swirling melody lurching into moments of delicious madness. *Holi* offers a brief excursion into an Indian sonic landscape while Jones' gentle voice shimmers on the piano-led ballad *The Goddess And The Green Man*.

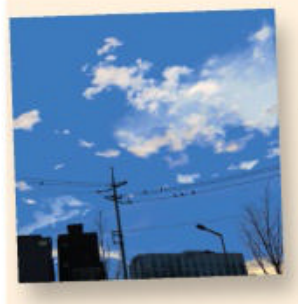
He channels Led Zeppelin's big riffing *The Immigrant Song* on the rockier, more complex *Rapa Nui*, while the lilting, optimistic *Light* finds Jones' Camel bandmate Andy Latimer bringing the turn of the season gem to a close with his resonant guitar. With lyrics by John and Elizabeth Holden, this beautiful, uplifting collection further confirms Jones as prog's eternal ray of sunshine. **AR**



POST-ROCK

Alex Lynham guides us through the peaks and valleys of essential post-rock.

After 2020's mammoth triple album, *Tautology*, American post-rockers **El Ten Eleven** could have been forgiven if they'd taken an extended break. However, they're already back with a new record, *New Year's Eve* (Joyful Noise). The album leans into the groovier side of their discography, while retaining their trademark sense of atmosphere and space via the use of sprawling pads and ambient loops. The title track is a good starting point, as is the complex, multipart journey of *Meta Metta*.



South Korean shoegazers **Parannoul** racked up one of the most popular shoegaze albums on Bandcamp with their *To See The Next Part of The Dream* LP. Now they're back with a B-sides collection, *White Ceiling/Black Dots Wandering Around* (parannoul.bandcamp.com). As lo-fi production is already part of the band's aesthetic, the songs stand on their own, despite being called B-sides. As a result, the six-track EP is a worthwhile prospect for those waiting for new material.

Spanish post-rockers **We Were Heading North** have released their third album, *Three* (El Hombre Bala Records). Some tracks are straightforward by-the-numbers post-rock. Others, like *Adirondacks,* bring in influences from elsewhere. The song's propulsive, frantic beats — provided here by drummer Carlos Amador — nod to a punk influence, even though the rest of the instrumentalists keep their atmospheric focus.

We Broke The Weather's self-titled LP (webroketheweather.bandcamp.com) is one of the biggest surprises of the year so far. Their debut is a wild ride through Crimson-esque prog, math and post-rock. The band describe it simply as, "one of the luckiest musical encounters between complete strangers ever." At times the blend of genres is overwhelming, but it's navigated with humour, drama and deft musicianship throughout. For a taste, try the eight-minute album highlight *Fire Season*.

Elsewhere, Australian prog experimentalists **Closure In Moscow** have reissued remastered and expanded forms of their three albums. Needless to say, there's a lot to like for fans of intricate guitar work and multitextured, stop-start dynamics. 2014's *Pink Lemonade* is without doubt the highlight. It boasts razor-sharp, oddball highlights like *Dinosaur Boss Battle*, *The Church Of The Technochrist* and *Neoprene Byzantine*. The rawness and energy of their debut EP, *The Penance And The Patience*, is also worth checking out.

Finally, Texas shoegazers **Astragal** are releasing their first LP, *Pure Cashmere* (astragal.bandcamp.com). It's not world-changing, but it is a wonderfully executed piece of C86-inspired alt-rock. Many albums in the broad church of shoegaze and post-rock end up as pastiche but *Pure Cashmere* is identifiably of the genre, yet still distinct from its 80s and 90s forebears, embodied by the opening track, *Mirrored Writing*.

PURE REASON REVOLUTION

Above Cirrus INSIDEOUT

Art-rockers set their sights high on second post-comeback album.

Above Cirrus takes its title from a random conversation between Pure Reason Revolution singer/guitarist/keyboardist and linchpin Jon Courtney and guitarist Greg Jong, who has now returned to the fold for the first time as a full-time band member since 2005's *Cautionary Tales For The Brave* EP. Observing the clouds above them during a session break for the album, Jong remarked that the highest of those in the sky were called 'cirrus' and that nothing was

> **They are stretching beyond Earthbound concerns.**

beyond them. But surely there is more? What of the Latin phrase 'per aspera ad astra', which translates as 'through hardships to the stars'? Now, that's an apt concept, surely? And not least because the feeling that Pure Reason Revolution are stretching beyond Earthbound concerns is hard to deny.

Their fifth album – their second released since returning from a hiatus that lasted for most of the 2010s – is a densely packed affair whose treasures begin to yield and reveal themselves after several listens. Far from being a passive experience, wherein the music washes and soothes, *Above Cirrus* almost dares the listener to second-guess its approach and motives.

Unlike 2020's *Eupnea*, this isn't an album tied to a single concept, but it sure as hell feels like it. It's tempting to read a greater meaning into the songs' themes of ever-changing relationships and how quickly love can turn to hate, but it would be erroneous to do so. Each of the seven songs here stand on their own two feet, though with the gaps between them either tight or washed away by segues, *Above Cirrus* can sometimes give off the deceptive feel of single track spread over its 46-minute running time.

But like those volatile relationships at the heart of *Above Cirrus*, the music can turn on a penny. Witness *New Kind Of Evil* wherein the harmonising between Jon Courtney and bassist/keyboardist/co-vocalist Chloë Alper is suddenly and spectacularly ripped asunder by the sheer violence and heavy riffing of their instruments. Should listeners find themselves lulled into a false sense of security, then it's no spoiler to say they'll soon be shaken like leaves and branches in a hurricane. Similarly, the epic *Scream Sideways* is a multi-faceted beast that revels in Floydian waves of intoxicated bliss before erupting into an apocalyptic fury that stomps on all before it. And then, surveying the damage around, it tries to make amends with jazzy flourishes and a gradual retreat into solace and silence.

The electro throbs of *Phantoms* almost verge on pop. And while these stylistic changes move hither and yon, Pure Reason Revolution know that the only way is up.

JULIAN MARSZALEK

DEVIN TOWNSEND

Dreampiece HEVY DEVY

The dreamy, free-flowing return of ambient Dev.

A single, 50-minute ambient suite, *Dreampiece* is the sound of Devin Townsend returning to a comfort zone of sorts. This is firmly in the meandering, freeform new age realm that has provided the Canadian with a textural background for nearly all of his work.

Free from melody or structure, *Dreampiece* rolls majestically forward, with spectral chord changes adding occasional shifts in mood, and all enshrouded with more reverb than seems strictly reasonable. Around the 30-minute mark, it seems to mutate from airy, floating reverie to something a little darker and more drone-driven. With shades of *Stars Of The Lid* and Aphex Twin's *Selected Ambient Works*, Townsend's inescapable musicality begins to rear its head a little more.

Thereafter, *Dreampiece* spirals into the ether and evaporates, weirdly soothing to the last. The intention behind all of this seems to be to offer listeners a moment of tranquillity away from the stresses of this uniquely unsettling moment in history. Whether or not most people have the attention span to sit through it is another matter entirely, but it's hard to blame Dev for trying. **DL**

VOLA

Live From The Pool MASCOT

Swimming pool-based live lockdown action courtesy of Swedish prog metallers.

For their first live album, recorded during the pandemic, VOLA set up in an empty swimming pool in an abandoned military base. Despite the lack of an audience, *Live From The Pool* captures the Danish-Swedish quartet's energy across a setlist spanning their three studio albums to date.

Musically, they draw upon prog, djent, electronica and, in *These Black Claws*, even a little rap (better in reality than it looks on paper). Frontman Asger Mygind has an openness and vulnerability in his voice that's akin to Einar Solberg from Leprous, qualities highlighted in the stripped-down *Gutter Moon (October Session)*. When they slam into the heavy sections of *Head Mounted Sideways*, Mygind's guitar and Nicolai Mogensen's bass sound like they're drop tuned down to the centre of the Earth. Then they'll go from landing piledriver punches to a wide-open soundscape or anthemic chorus with an uplifting melody.

The album is accompanied by the film of the livestream on Blu-ray, showcasing the striking location and creative light show, but the music more than stands on its own as VOLA cement their status as one of the most exciting, powerful young bands in prog. **DW**

WARDRUNA

Kvitravn - First Flight Of The White Raven MUSIC FOR NATIONS

Stunning live document of the Norwegian shamans' mid-lockdown album launch.

Wardruna's 2021 album *Kvitravn* deepened the reputation of Einar Selvik's Norwegian collective as a serious artistic and cultural force. They marked its release with an online show, in which they played the album and selections from their back catalogue. This document of that event shows it was a remarkable achievement in itself.

From the loping, incessant title track, this performance is packed with drama. Selvik leads the band's male and female vocalists – often they're in thrilling unison, but also branch off on their own melodic paths. For non-speakers of Norwegian, the tones they hit with this beautiful language have a pagan potency. With traditional pipes, strings and drums weaving an eldritch atmosphere, Wardruna's minor-key music is haunting and unsettling, with folk elements by turns ominous and melancholy. Throughout Selvik excels, and he's matched all the way by Lindy-Fay Hella, an incredible singer and presence.

The release comes on vinyl and CD, and the limited box set includes a DVD of the original performance – the show's visuals make the music all the more spine-tingling. **GRM**

WORRIEDABOUTSATAN

Bloodsport THIS IS IT FOREVER

Darkness, dread and sinister sounds on Gavin Miller's ninth.

Over 16 years and nine albums as Worriedaboutsatan, Bradford artist Gavin Miller has developed an innovative stripe of highbrow electronica with dark ambient spaces, proggy synth surfaces and metallic, post-rock edges. Fans of Radiohead's filter/beat noodlings will find much in the avant-garde sounds of *Even Temper* (2015) and 2020's *Time Lapse*, and as he makes music for our century of perma-crisis, *Bloodsport* sees Miller at his most unsettling. "The way things are at the moment," he has said, "made it difficult to give it a happy soundtrack."

Any cheer here is derived from Miller's artistry, not the tunes. With a distant bass drum as its heartbeat, *Bis Ich Komme* spreads like noxious fog, its eerie industrial atmospherics and disembodied voices only blown out by harsh synths and drum and bass beat. It's hard to be too gloomy when a piece is entitled *Sigourney Weaver Fanclub President*, or is as hypnotically beautiful as *Apex Redditor*, but it's easy when the electronic fabric turns properly sinister, on *Slur They Words, An Absolute Living Hell, Pt.1* and, indeed, *Pt.2*. Music to doomscroll to. **GRM**

XPROPAGANDA

The Heart Is Strange ZTT

Triumphant return for reconfigured 80s art-pop outfit.

Reuniting original Propaganda members Claudia Brücken and Susanne Freytag alongside producer Stephen Lipson, *The Heart Is Strange* is a compelling listen, sounding exactly like it could have followed their old group's debut, *A Secret Wish* in 1985. From the synthesised detonation at the start of the album, the listener knows exactly what to expect. With its dispassionate voices, orchestral stabs and additional synthesised percussion entering at the halfway mark, six-minute opener *The Night* captures all the urgency and thrill of the original Propaganda.

The call and response on *Beauty Is The Truth* couldn't be more high-period sixth form playlet ZTT, with lines such as '*a firm handshake or a Chinese burn*'. *Don't (You Mess With Me)* is a succulent, strident slice of glam pop. The 10-minute closer *Ribbons Of Steel*, with its mention of '*the old country*', finds flashes of Underworld, David Sylvian and Talk Talk. It sounds old, but good old, an amalgam of 80s and 90s that roars in the 20s. The austere grandeur of *The Heart Is Strange* and the interplay by Brücken and Freytag is like eavesdropping again on the pair once labelled 'ABBA from hell'. **DE**

ZACH TABORI

Soft Boiled FLESH FURY

Prog meets glam rock for a rip-snorting good time.

Los Angeles madcap Zach Tabori launches himself at the listener for a no-holds-barred musical throwdown with *Soft Boiled*. Its eight tracks zip by in a blur, but they pack a smörgåsbord of ideas and energy into the brisk listen.

Musically, it's somewhere between Frank Zappa, Jim Steinman, and LA glam rock, with the Zappa influence reinforced by the presence of his onetime associate Tommy Mars on keys. Tabori unleashes a trio of pugnacious rockers with the slamming *No Disgrace*, the swaggering, Alice Cooper-esque *Unchecked Desire* and the delightfully demented *CLAO*. The third has a heavyweight riff, but there's a freewheeling saxophone solo before Tabori throws in a burst of Turkish folk music, shredding on a traditional lute called a Saz.

Get Out (I'm Ready) is Zappa meets disco with a great falsetto vocal from Tabori, while *Contrapuntal Runt* romps through demented stabs of syncopation, orchestral strings, and a progtastic organ solo. The album wraps with *You Know You Just Want Me To Die*, a gleefully overblown power ballad about celebrity obituaries. Although it's over all too soon, *Soft Boiled* is an absolute blast. **DW**

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Grant Moon has a rummage down the back of the *Prog* sofa for the ones that nearly got away...

Even in less nerve-shredding times, Etienne Jaumet and Cosmic Neman's **Zombie Zombie** wouldn't be for everyone. On the French electro duo's latest release, *Vae Vobis* (Born Bad), the vocals are sung in Latin and processed by a vocoder, but, as niche as that sounds, it actually works very well. The 'doomed angel' choir adds to the medieval mood of the album, but there's enough invention, krautrock savvy and synth hooks to make numbers such as *Dissolutum*, *Lacrymosa* and (now sadly prescient) *War Is Coming* rock along on the musical margins.

Last year English guitarist **Rod While** offered the highly accomplished set *Open The Cage*, and he now follows that with *Vigil* (rodwhile.bandcamp.com). While is a versatile guitarist with a taste for jazz and fusion, and a producer with a golden ear for tone, so his intelligent compositions come couched in pristine, electro-leaning arrangements. *Sibylline*'s 9/8 upright bass riff, *Viridian*'s sleek, Jeff Beck-y guitar lines and *Heliotrope*'s acid jazz trip are among the classy highlights on another worthy offering from this overlooked talent.

A cursory glance at the cover of **Robert Crosbie**'s *The Global Machine* (Iamgeisha) is enough to reveal the Irish artist's passion for King Crimson. That said, while the record is freighted with cerebral guitar work it's by no means a *Discipline* pastiche. There's a retro, 80s feel to some of Crosbie's soundscapes and tones (the groovy *Warp*, the quirky and groovy *Twerp*). Add in some 90s-style techno (*Machinery*) and industrial/ambient (closer *Samana*, beautiful), and there's much to savour here.

After last year's compelling *Tales From Strange Travels*, keyboardist **Geoff Proudley** returns with *K Of A* (geoffproudley.co.uk). Inspired by the life of Katherine of Aragon, this sweeping classical music was made using high-end orchestral samples rather than the even-costlier real thing. It's hard not to think of Rick Wakeman (and more recently Ms Amy Birks) when considering music evoking Henry VIII's wives, and while this is probably more prog in theme than composition, the stirring harpsichords, emotive pianos and Proudley's detailed, historically literate approach make for an engaging listen.

And closing with another French band this time, Brest quartet **Tranzat** return with more pummelling fun on their third record *Ouh La La* (Klonosphere Records). With singer Manuel Liegard supplying larynx-shredding vocals, the quartet bring swathes of heavy downtuned guitars (*Lobster Beaujolais*), hooky grooves (*Mr Awesome, Lord Dranula*) and, clearly, a taste for quirky song titles (*Climbing Tibetan Mountains To Learn The Secrets Of The Mind*). Those pastel shades they're sporting on the album cover aren't fooling anyone — this is gonzo, left-field stuff that fans of Devin Townsend really need to hear.

JADE WARRIOR

Jade Warrior/Last Autumn's Dream ESOTERIC

Two of a unique kind from one of prog's most brilliant oddities.

Jade Warrior were among the most original of the early 70s progressives. The band's two principal members, Jon Field and Tony Duhig, met in unlikely circumstances when working in a factory as forklift truck drivers in the early 60s. Field was a percussionist and flautist whose head had been turned by modernist composers Stravinsky and Bartók, while Duhig was more of a fan of Duane Eddy. But things had changed by the time of Jade Warrior's self-titled

> **Even now, these albums remain an idiosyncratic delight.**

1971 debut album, on which the latter was revealed as a guitarist of rare invention.

Joined by Glyn Havard on bass and vocals, theirs was a sensuous but spartan soundworld with a hint of joss stick-scented exoticism and some Fourth World sensibilities, a decade before the concept was introduced by Jon Hassell and Brian Eno. On *Windweaver* what sounds like flute and hand drums from a Javanese Gamelan ensemble are set alongside Duhig's gentle chords and Hendrixy effects. His fuzz guitar drives *A Prenormal Day In Brighton*, which comes across like a killer hard rock track, except the drumming sounds like Field thumping a box. On *Masai Morning* one imagines Jethro Tull in an African drum workshop, and there's an element of jazz in the sprightly bass and flute embellishments of *Psychiatric Sergeant*.

Jade Warrior's singular approach continued on their third album, 1972's *Last Autumn's Dream* (its immediate predecessor, *Released*, isn't among these reissues). There's some heavy riffage on *The Snake*, the trio beefed up with Allan Price's kit drums, but elsewhere *Dark River* sounds even more curious than the music on their debut, with its strange dissonant picked guitar figures and harmonics, and a flute that sounds like it's played in a cave. When tom-tom patterns and percussion are added it comes across like ritual music of some imagined civilisation.

This is in stark contrast to *Joanne*, another of Jade Warrior's deliciously off-kilter rock songs, where the plan is that they are *'Gonna have a party... gonna get loaded'*. Here, a syncopated drum pattern out of early Beefheart, but mixed down beneath Havard's urgent vocal delivery, as Duhig goes into full wig-out mode. *The Demon Trucker* has a *Honky Tonk Women*-style drum rhythm, with insistent cowbell over rumbling toms and bongos, and double-tracked flute hooks — a combination that could have made for a good single with a fighting chance of success.

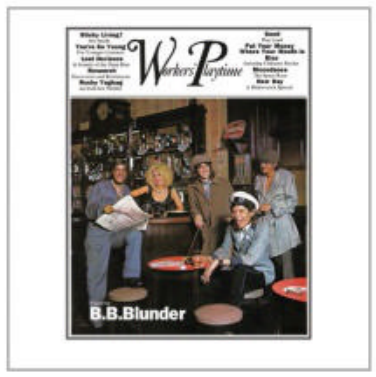
Jade Warrior were certainly one of a kind. Always set apart from their peers, even now these albums stubbornly resist categorisation and remain an idiosyncratic delight.

MIKE BARNES

BB BLUNDER

Workers' Playtime ESOTERIC

Newly remastered re-release of stylistically challenged 1971 obscurity.



The highways and byways of popular music are strewn with the detritus and wreckage of countless groups of nearly-rans, the just-not-good-enoughs and the plain unlucky. Ergo BB Blunder. Like so many of their contemporaries from the psychedelic scene of the late 60s and early 70s, BB Blunder have become a footnote while contemporaries such as King Crimson, Emerson, Lake & Palmer and Genesis – just for starters – are rightly held up as the exemplars of a new form of music.

There's a good reason for this. Whereas the pioneers of the nascent prog movement had a clear focus of what they wanted to do and how they were going to get there, the hapless BB Blunder produced one wildly erratic album and its less-than-committed line-up soon fell apart shortly after that album's release.

It could have been so different. They formed from the ashes of Blossom Toes – one of the best British psych bands of the day – when guitarist Brian Godding and bassist Brian Belshaw elected to keep going. Soon joined again by drummer Kevin Westlake – who'd played on the first Blossom Toes album, *We Are Ever So Clean* – the trio started out backing singer Julie Driscoll before renaming themselves BB Blunder.

Despite contributions from Driscoll and her musical partner, organist Brian Auger, as well as Rolling Stones guitarist Mick Taylor, who was recording *Sticky Fingers* next door, *Workers' Playtime* stylistically veers like a drunk heading home from a kebab shop at closing time. Taken on an individual basis there are plenty of tracks to enjoy here. The heavy bump-and-grind of *Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is* and *Sticky Living*'s irresistible groove succeed in separating asses from the sofa. Alas, *Research*'s creamy psychedelia and the heavy blues that beats at the heart of *Rise* are too sharply at odds to produce anything resembling a coherent statement. There's the occasional nugget on *Workers' Playtime*, but it's no treasure chest. **JM**

ROGER CHAPMAN

Moth To A Flame - The Recordings 1979-1981 ESOTERIC

A worthy package from the Family man's solo catalogue.

As with many great vocalists, few would ever accuse former Family frontman Roger Chapman of having a 'good' singing voice. But a characterful and unique one, most definitely. It's not the voice, it's the delivery. And at 79 it's still intact.

His post-Family output with Streetwalkers then solo has been patchy, some of it too close to alcohol-free pub rock or matt-finish R&B soul. When he does have a good song to dance with, however, the results can impress with real quality, whether that's via a bar-stool-kicking belter or a candle-lit ballad.

Moth To A Flame – The Recordings 1979-1981 brings together Chapman's first three solo albums, plus 25 bonus tracks drawn from studio out-takes and live recordings. Feet-finding debut *Chappo* typically runs hot and cold, tracks from the red tap including the classy *Shape Of Things*, *Pills*, and *Fave Of Stone* with its Family-favourite quiet/loud dynamic. The following year's *Mail Order* is a far broader and more engaging affair, the contrasting musical colours of the driving *Unknown Soldier (Can't Get To Heaven)*, the smouldering *He Was, She Was* and an almost electro *Ground Floor* lighting up an album that should be better known. Both records are here expanded with bonus tracks, the best of which include bar-room boogie *Fist To Yer Jaw*, a percussion-rattling out-take of *Higher Ground* and an intriguing, again almost electro, demo of it.

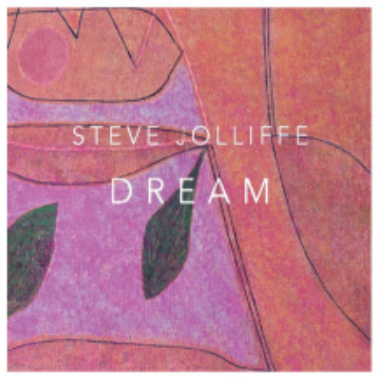
Alongside 1979's excellent *Live In Hamburg*, here with bonuses including a slinky rendition of Family's *Hey Mr Policeman* and evergreen hit *Burlesque*, there's also the *Live In Hamburg January 1981*, another smart, if shorter and rougher, collection.

A disc of out-takes and a previously unreleased live set recorded in 1979 for BBC Radio's In Concert series (*Who Pulled The Night Down/Talking About You/Down, Down, Down, Hang On To A Dream, Short List* and *Can't Come In*) completes a worthy package. **PH**

STEVE JOLIFFE

Magical/Dream/A Beautiful Mystery/333 RSK ENTERTAINMENT

Quartet of recent reissues from former Tangerine Dream man.



Steve Joliffe will forever be remembered by some as the English multi-instrumentalist who appeared mysteriously in Tangerine Dream after Peter Baumann's departure. Despite the fact he had actually played in one of the German electronic pioneers' earliest incarnations, striking up a friendship with leader Edgar Froese, Joliffe played on just one album – 1978's *Cyclone*, in which the group briefly transformed into early King Crimson – before he departed for pastures new.

Since then, Joliffe has amassed a sizeable catalogue, spanning library music, soundtracks and collaborations with fellow ex-Dreamer Klaus Schulze. Joliffe and Froese's relationship is explored on the earliest and most recommended of these four reissues, *Magical*. Originally released in the year of the latter's death, and subtitled *In Memory Of Edgar Froese 1944-2015*, it's a beautiful 53-minute requiem, featuring warm washes of sound and ambient diversions that were inspired by a dream Joliffe had where his former bandmate was wandering in his garden.

Dreaming is also a predominant theme on 2017's self-explanatory *Dream*, which strays deep into steely electronica. Composed by Joliffe to decipher the complications that develop on human pathways, it alternates between dark throbs and unsettling lullabies. The soundscapes of *A Beautiful Mystery* (2018) grapple with weighty topics such as the mystery of the universe, the awe of our environment, and the idea of self and purpose. The sparing drop-ins of electric guitar add spice and variation to an accomplished improvisation. Joliffe's most recent album, 2020's *333*, is the most upbeat of this batch, its trancelike tones expressing freedom, awareness and returning home.

Across this quartet of reissues, Joliffe evokes the work of the electronic music's pioneers and, although beat-free, the successive generations too. And yet, throughout, he created something that is resolutely new. **DE**

NEKTAR

...Sounds Like This ESOTERIC

Expanded and remastered edition of Nektar's transitional third.

In late 1972, Hamburg-based Brits Nektar were building a profile in the psychedelic world, as their first two albums flailed between proggy concepts and routine blues wig-outs. Their third, *...Sounds Like This*, was to be their first release in the UK. So they had the idea, which presumably seemed like a good one at the time, to capture the essence of their live sound by recording a set in front of friends in a German studio.

The results weren't satisfactory, so they reconvened a few months later for overdubs and re-records. Inevitably, this escalated until some tracks were dropped entirely and new ones replaced them. So when *...Sounds Like This* was released in June 1973, it was something of a mish-mash, falling between two stools. It's dominated by shorter but heavier rock songs, with the longer escapades such as *1-2-3-4* and *A Day In The Life Of A Preacher* misfiring as prog, with Roye Albrighton's guitars too prominent, too strenuous.

An excellent work of excavation has now retrieved an hour-plus of missing sessions and jams from the blueprint, giving us this extended insight into what the album might have been. There are some loose, ropey knockabouts, best described as negligible, but also the revelations that are *Sunshine Down On The City* and *It's All In Your Mind*. Between them, they constitute over 25 minutes of Nektar in a much more creative, catalytic mood than on the generally so-so original album. Furthermore, they're heard playing drafts of material that eventually appeared on the greatly superior subsequent album, their 1974 masterpiece *Remember The Future*, their defining work.

For those who love that record, this is both disorientating and illuminating. It's showing you the Wizard of Oz behind the curtain, spoiling the illusion of effortless perfection. On the other hand, it's fascinating to learn how some of the patches which made up that quilt were kneaded and tweaked until they sat right. This release, then, remembers a flawed, formative record which enabled a brighter future. **CR**

MIKE RUTHERFORD

Smallcreep's Day MUSIC ON CD

Genesis man's overlooked solo album, long overdue re-evaluation.

By the turn of the 80s, any admirer of Genesis needed deep pockets. Aside from the group's own releases, Tony Banks, Peter Gabriel, Steve Hackett and Anthony Phillips had all issued solo records. Granted, Phil Collins had still to embark on his own stellar career, yet he'd already amassed a separate catalogue with Brand X.

Mike Rutherford was comparatively late to the party with his own solo debut, *Smallcreep's Day*, and as a result, when

> **It proves to be a true missing link in the Genesis story.**

making decisions on expenditure, many gave it a miss. More fool them. Produced by David Hentschel, featuring Anthony Phillips on keyboards, and like *Duke* and Banks' *A Curious Feeling*, recorded at ABBA's POLAR Studios, it proves to be a true missing link in the Genesis story.

Rutherford's very invisibility within Genesis has sometimes worked against him. Whereas it is crystal clear what other members bring to the table, Rutherford is a shapeshifter, under-appreciated as a bassist and overlooked as a guitarist. *Smallcreep's Day* came at the wrong time — released a month before *Duke* — and seemed out of step with its moment; concepts and side-long suites were rather old hat.

Based on Peter Currell Brown's 1965 novel of the same name, the seven-part, 24-minute title track that takes up the original album's side one explores Smallcreep's journey to find out exactly what happens at other parts of the factory he's worked at for 40 years. Vocalist Noel McCalla — once considered to replace Gabriel in Genesis — acquits himself admirably, and the churning modernism of the fourth part, *Cats And Rats (In This Neighbourhood)*, hints to what was heard later on *Abacab* and *Genesis*.

Among the second side's five pop songs, *Romani* has a nice jazzy chorus, *Every Road* is the sort of arms-round-a-mate end-of-night-anthem that Mike + The Mechanics went on to do so well, and *Time And Time Again* is a maximum-strength Rutherford ballad in the vein of *Your Own Special Way* and *Follow You, Follow Me*. Sonically, *Smallcreep's Day* has the crisp, Scandinavian modernity of the ABBA records of the age, and the playing is unsurprisingly world class.

It reached a respectable No.13 in the UK, though it's hard to shake the feeling that had it been given a less quaintly estoreric title, *Smallcreep's Day* may have had more appeal to the more mainstream music fans that Genesis were increasingly attracting. But as with everything Rutherford, it was all frightfully understated. The album quietly disappeared, and was unavailable for years. Still, if the last domino has truly fallen on Genesis' career, a return to *Smallcreep's Day* will provide some consolation.

DARYL EASLEA

Find Your **Perfect Tone**

Every issue, Guitarist brings you the best gear, features, lessons and interviews to fuel your passion for guitar

Also available to order online at **www.magazinesdirect.com/guitarist-magazine**

PORCUPINE TREE

The Sky Moves Sideways TRANSMISSION

The sound of Steven Wilson's solo project flowering into a band.

Having released de facto solo albums *On The Sunday Of Life...* and *Up The Downstair* as Porcupine Tree at the dawn of the 90s, Steven Wilson began to see that the experimental rock project he'd started as a lark might actually have legs. In '93 he recruited Chris Maitland (occasional drummer for No-Man), ex-Japan keyboardist Richard Barbieri and bassist Colin Edwin, both of whom had made some contributions to *Up The Downstair*. Porcupine Tree set to work *en groupe*, releasing an EP of *Moonloop* and *Stars Die* in late '94, with first album, *The Sky Moves Sideways*, following in February '95.

Presented in a gatefold sleeve, this double-disc vinyl set includes a segued version of *Moonloop* and *Stars Die* – shimmering, beautiful pieces that point to the gentler side of the sublime work to come in the band's catalogue. The titular LP itself has been cut from the remasters Wilson made for the 2007 *Delerium Years* box set, and while formative in some ways it's still a pretty magnificent, cosmic listen.

Before flipping into some slightly dated big beat/techno rock, 18-minute opener *The Sky Moves Sideways Phase 1* gives ambient textures hinting at the Tangs, Aphex Twin and Pink Floyd. Barbieri's hard at work, Wilson's psych rock guitars are woozy and languorous, then jagged and urgent (his future bandmate Theo Travis adds flute). *Phase 2* of the title track features vocalisations from Suzanne J Barbieri, and while not quite *The Great Gig In The Sky* it's another tick in the Floyd box. Two tunes were made by Wilson alone: *Dislocated Day*'s visceral riffs have stood the test of time, and the ethereal *The Moon Touches Your Shoulder* comes with expressive, Gilmour-like tones, as Wilson's trademark melancholy voice begins to find its full form.

By 1996's follow-up, *Signify*, the psychedelic sonics had been refined and Wilson's songwriting emboldened by the full, impressive band now around him. Formative and Floydy it may be, but Porcupine Tree's first work as a group remains one engrossing trip. **GRM**

OLIVER WAKEMAN

Collaborations ELFLOCK RECORDS

A reminder of Wakeman junior's skills and the power of partnership.

Through his family connections, stints at the keyboards with Yes and the Strawbs, various side-projects and running his own band for many years, Oliver Wakeman must have an enviable contacts book. This three-disc collection celebrates two of his more notable collaborations bundled together with a couple of previously released albums and an additional disc of live tracks.

The 3 Ages Of Magick saw Wakeman creating an instrumental album with Steve Howe in 2001, each track inspired by tales from English folklore. The compositions range from the delicate understatement of *The Forgotten King*, via the celtic influence of *Standing Stones*, to the more obvious proggy band numbers such as *Mind Over Matter*. Fans of Howe's guitar work should fast forward to the latter half of *Hy Breasail* where he applies real fretboard wizardry to an acoustic.

Released to wide acclaim in 2013, *Ravens & Lullabies* has Wakeman teaming up with Gordon Giltrap. The album largely alternates between songs with a full band (the "Ravens") and lighter piano/guitar instrumental duets ("Lullabies"). The latter tend towards the quasi-classical and folk that showcase both artists' prodigious talents. Those hankering for tracks with a harder edge should head straight to *Credit Carnival* and Giltrap's ravishing electric guitar soloing.

The third disc in this set is particularly interesting. Built from recently unearthed live tracks and other recordings already in Wakeman's possession, it's a wonderful synthesis of the character and compositions from Wakeman and Giltrap's back catalogues. Joined by Paul Manzi on vocals, the pair produce a rich sound and complement each other's playing with taste and skill. Stripped of unnecessary technology and recording trickery, it adds a dimension to some of the tracks from *Ravens & Lullabies* missing from the studio versions. Alongside the remastered original albums (courtesy of Karl Groom) with bonus tracks, this live disc is a very tempting added extra. **GMM**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Dave Brock Presents... This Was Your Future: Space Rock (And Other Psychedelics) 1978-1998

CHERRY RED

Worthy document of the post-70s free festival scene.

Curated by Hawkwind's master of the universe, this three-CD set is a trip back in time to a scene that, even when it was happening, was rarely given any attention in the music press, existing instead as a next-generation space-rock underground based around club nights such as Alice In Wonderland, free festivals and DIY cassette labels.

> **It was a scene that often bristled with a righteous anger.**

Rather than just being a re-run of countercultural Ladbroke Grove circa 1971 — although there are certainly strong elements of that — this was a scene that often bristled with a righteous anger inspired by increasingly bloody confrontations with the Man, most notoriously at 1985's Battle Of The Beanfield when the police forcibly prevented the Stonehenge Festival from taking place. Listen to how Omnia Opera's *Space Bastard* mutates Hawkwind's stun riff template into cosmic aggro while ranting about *'brain police'* and *'the people in high places'*. Mandragora's *Rainbow Warrior* has a similarly tough sound, like the Edgar Broughton Band at their most stroppy. It's a vibe that seems to have crossed the Atlantic as well, with the American bands here favouring a harder, more wired take on space rock, from the dense, churning heaviness of ST 37's *Ghosts Of Tempera Nymphs* to the industrial goth of Pressurehed's *Red Delta*.

It's certainly not all doom and gloom, though. In fact, there's a lot of good-natured daftness on display here. *Toadstool Soup* by Boris And His Bolshie Balalika (ahem) is a bouncy campfire drug song that morphs into a rather good parody of *Kashmir*; Dr Hasbeen's *Spirit Of Brock* speaks for itself — *'The spirit of rock — Dave Brock!'*; and Dumpy's Rusty Nuts' *Hawkwind* (keep up at the back) is actually an entirely credible if amusing take on its source material. Prog gets a look in too. Poisoned Electrick Head come over like a HGTG version of Cardiacs on *Astral Tjunc*; Moom's *The Higher Sun* is replete with Canterbury Sound vibes; and Kava Kava's *Poke* is airy and soulful in a psych-prog vein. And then there are the outliers, such as the mantric riffing of Kryptasthesie's *An Evening Following A Cutle-Fish* or the echoplexed, low-slung groove of Dead Flowers' *Altered State Circus*.

Unsurprisingly, there's plenty here from Hawkwind's friends and relations, pick of the bunch being the Sonic Assassins' wild, synth-drenched *Golden Void* and the wonderful glam punk of *Dodgem Dude* by Michael Moorcock's Deep Fix. With sleevenotes from Hawkwind biographer Ian Abrahams, this is a fascinating archive of a genuine 'alternative to the alternative' scene.

JOE BANKS

THE UK'S BIGGEST HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE

METAL HAMMER

NEW ISSUE ON SALE NOW

THE BIGGEST BANDS. THE HEAVIEST MUSIC.
WORLD-EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS.

BUY YOUR ISSUE TODAY

PRINT EDITION AVAILABLE FROM
HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/METALHAMMERMAG

DIGITAL EDITIONS AVAILABLE ON IOS AND ANDROID

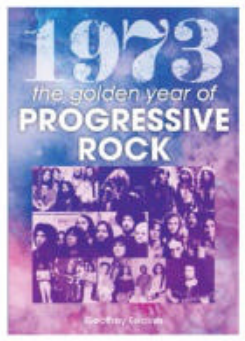
WWW.METALHAMMER.COM

/metalhammer /metalhammeruk /metalhammer

1973: THE GOLDEN YEAR OF PROGRESSIVE ROCK

Geoffrey Feakes SONICBOND PUBLISHING

Never mind *Tie A Yellow Ribbon*, here's the prog.



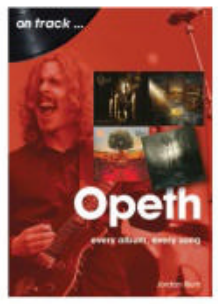
For those addicted to the pop charts, 1973 was all about Sweet, Slade and 10cc. The album charts were bossed by Bowie and Elton. But let's go along with this book's proposal that it was prog's peak (it was, at least, *within* prog's first peak: that's allowable). After an opening section that gives a standard yet nonetheless entertaining run through of what prog is and where it came from, with sidesteps into the basics of krautrock and Canterbury, this volume examines 20 key prog albums from that year.

It's hard to argue with the selections – from *A Passion Play* and *Tales From Topographic Oceans* (both, as is pointed out, panned by critics at the time) to *The Six Wives Of Henry XIII* and *Selling England By The Pound*, the genre was in fruitful, imaginative form. King Crimson, Gong, Can and Gentle Giant also make the list, as do arguably less obvious opuses like ELO's *On The Third Day* and Kayak's *See See The Sun*. The author is deeply in love with Greenslade and describes Magma as "an assault to the senses". While the only quotes are from contemporary press interviews, enough ashes are burning here to keep your brain salad tossed. **CR**

OPETH: EVERY ALBUM, EVERY SONG

Jordan Blum SONICBOND PUBLISHING

From death metal to prog, one song at a time.



Jordan Blum, who's also given the *On Track* treatment to Dream Theater and Jethro Tull, puts Opeth's recorded studio output under the microscope with his latest offering. It's clear that Blum is a big fan, and there's a tendency to shower superlatives everywhere, although he's less enamoured of some of the later works – principally *Heritage*, which he regards as a bold if not wholly successful leap into the unknown for Mikael Åkerfeldt and co.

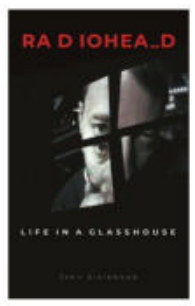
The track-by-track breakdowns might benefit from some music theory, and Blum's descriptions of the playing can become florid, writing of "fatalistic percussion" or a "peacefully nihilistic bridge", which are colourful if confusing. The stories behind the makings of the albums are the most compelling sections though, dealing with the struggles that the band faced in their early years, all the personnel and label changes, and their later critical and commercial successes.

The band's quotes are all second-hand, and Blum leans heavily on 2016's officially sanctioned *Book Of Opeth* in that regard, but they're well chosen and illuminate the varied impetus behind their journey from death metal to full-blown prog. Perhaps best consumed as a side dish to *Book Of Opeth* rather than as a standalone tome. **DW**

RADIOHEAD: LIFE IN A GLASSHOUSE

John Aizlewood PALAZZO EDITIONS

Insightful look over the career of modern rock's greatest visionaries.



Radiohead always were closer to Pink Floyd than they'd admit: a band so cushioned by privilege that the dramas that enveloped them always came from within rather than without. A chunk of their career has been spent either agonising interminably over their music or stroppily reacting to the success it brought them. Yet unlike their forebears, the Oxford band's trials brought them closer together rather than pushed them apart.

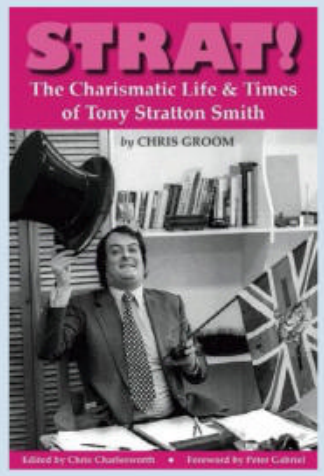
John Aizlewood's concise but insightful biography charts their rise from the student unions of 1980s Britain to the lofty art-rock perch on which they currently sit, via such landmark albums as *The Bends*, *Kid A*, *In Rainbows* and 2011's spectral, underrated *The King Of Limbs*. Aizlewood isn't averse to rolling his eyes at some of their more cantankerous caprices, although he's ultimately sympathetic, recognising that the desire to constantly redraw the boundaries can have an emotional and physical cost.

Life In A Glasshouse is a celebration of Radiohead's music, naturally, but it's more than that: this is a story of a deep-rooted friendship between five men who have played together for almost 40 years. In that respect, it captures the humanity of a band that has often kept the world at arm's length. **DEV**

STRAT! THE CHARISMATIC LIFE & TIMES OF TONY STRATTON SMITH

Chris Groom WYMER PUBLISHING

Revealing biography of the man who was Mother.



The company you keep can say a lot about you as a person. In Tony Stratton Smith's case, he's still best known for his association with The Nice, Bonzo Dog Band, Van der Graaf Generator, Genesis, and the many artists who called the famous Charisma label their home.

> **An engrossing portrait of a flawed but much-loved visionary.**

Managers and label bosses in the music industry don't always enjoy a good reputation, least of all from those whose interests they are meant to represent. However, after his death from pancreatic cancer in 1987, aged just 53, it says something about the man and the depth of his relationship with the artists that so many of them still speak of Strat with genuine affection and respect.

Being the manager, record label, publisher, and booking agent all rolled into one for some acts on Charisma was, of course, ethically dubious, but commonplace in a business where musicians' desire to record albums and play to the crowd dulled their capacity to properly query a contract or royalty statement. Yet there are few complaints from the groups who regarded him as a mother hen always ready to fight for them against industry indifference.

Chris Groom's diligently researched book vividly brings the whirl of the late 60s/early 70s Soho to life, empathetically portraying a booze-soaked Strat lurching from threadbare offices to catch opening time at the pub and onwards to late-night watering holes, dispensing bonhomie and drinks to all who came within his orbit. That Charisma became a going concern was almost miraculous — though, as Groom makes clear, the real miracle is that his assistant and later, label manager, Gail Colson stayed as long as she did.

After selling Charisma to Richard Branson's Virgin, he eagerly indulged his lifelong love of the turf as a racehorse owner but longed for the buzz that had gone with the label. Groom touches on the ennui of a man who perhaps only became himself being the centre of attention in that artistic milieu: "More than anything else, it was the people that Tony missed the most, the day-to-day contact with creative minds — a pint with Peter Hammill, a literary lunch with John Betjeman, whisky and cigarettes with Graham Chapman."

Strat's contribution to progressive music's development was hugely influential, as Charisma's impressive legacy demonstrates. Groom deftly paints an engrossing portrait of a flawed but much-loved visionary.

SID SMITH

Take a bow

VAN DER GRAAF GENERATOR

VENUE	THE LONDON PALLADIUM	DATE	24/02/2022

The much postponed tour by Van der Graaf Generator is taking place at last, and there's a lot of love in the room on tonight's London date. The applause after every song, which includes a number of standing ovations, is rather like that which might accompany a lifetime achievement accolade at an awards ceremony. Not that the band show anything like entitlement or complacency.

The first half of the set largely features songs recorded since their reformation in 2005, starting with *Interference Patterns* with its criss-crossing keyboard lines and agitated rhythms. Hammill's earlier material for the group was lyrically more metaphorical or dealt with characters and scenarios. But mirroring the themes in his solo work, in these more recent group creations he addresses mortality and the passing of time in an unflinching way on the epic *Over The Hill*; and more humorously on *All That Before*, an account of age-related forgetfulness and confusion set to shifting patterns of gonzo fuzz-guitar riffage.

Tonight's show takes place on the evening that Russian forces begin their invasion of Ukraine. Hammill explains that they change the set around from night to night, but "we had to play this one", he says as the band lead into *Every Bloody Emperor*, which is delivered with simmering anger. Van der Graaf Generator have continued to change and develop, and inevitably some online commentators have grumbled that their newer material doesn't stand comparison with their 70s heyday, however these songs now sound like classics. Especially tonight.

Hammill's voice is still a powerful and emotive instrument and his guitar is raw and loud; Hugh Banton remains one of prog's most underrated keyboard players, playing basslines on foot pedals and weaving his melodic patterns into the fabric of the songs, punctuating speedy runs with crunching dissonances. Guy Evans is one of the best rock drummers of his generation — precise, thoughtful and propulsive, his crisp playing punctuated with idiosyncratic breaks.

And as the musicians admit, the difference between Van der Graaf and their 70s peers was that most would aim to put on a well-drilled spectacle, but Van der Graaf have always had a peculiar chemistry; the excitement and intensity they generate also tends towards chaos making them prog's "unstable entity". In Evans' words, they could go "totally liquid", both in terms of improvisation and also in collectively losing their bearings. Put another way, if most bands cruise along steadily with everything under control, when playing live Van der Graaf can navigate hairpin bends on two wheels, sometimes careering off across bumpy ground. This happens a couple of times in the set, but order is soon restored.

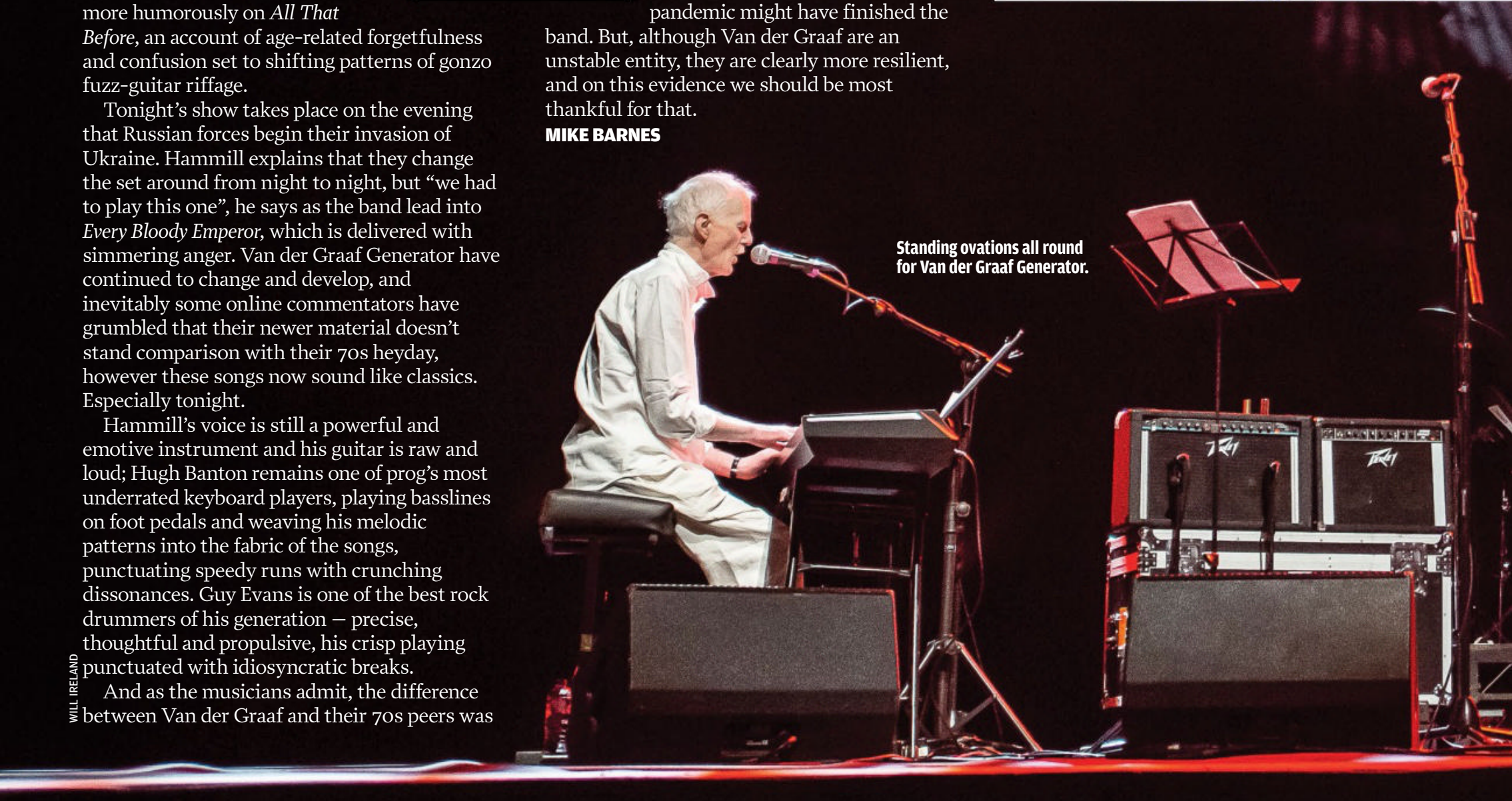
Tonight, Hammill seems like he's inhabiting his songs totally — or is maybe possessed by them — and a somewhat ragged *Lemmings* is scalp-raising in its intensity, as is the gothic, hymnal *Man-Erg*, and the trio achieve juggernaut momentum on *Scorched Earth*. But the standout song, which they play at almost every show, is *Childlike Faith In Childhood's End*: an extraordinary, hyper-emotional narrative about the final chapter of the human race and its transformation, which Hammill sings as if he is railing against the very cosmos — and just about winning.

Thinking again of *Over The Hill*, Hammill warns that when the countdown "reaches zero, our heroes disappear", and on his Sofa Sound website he's recently warned that there would be an inevitable slowing down — although it must also be said that in recent years he has shown little sign of doing that. Hammill has also said that the delays in touring due to the pandemic might have finished the band. But, although Van der Graaf are an unstable entity, they are clearly more resilient, and on this evidence we should be most thankful for that.

MIKE BARNES

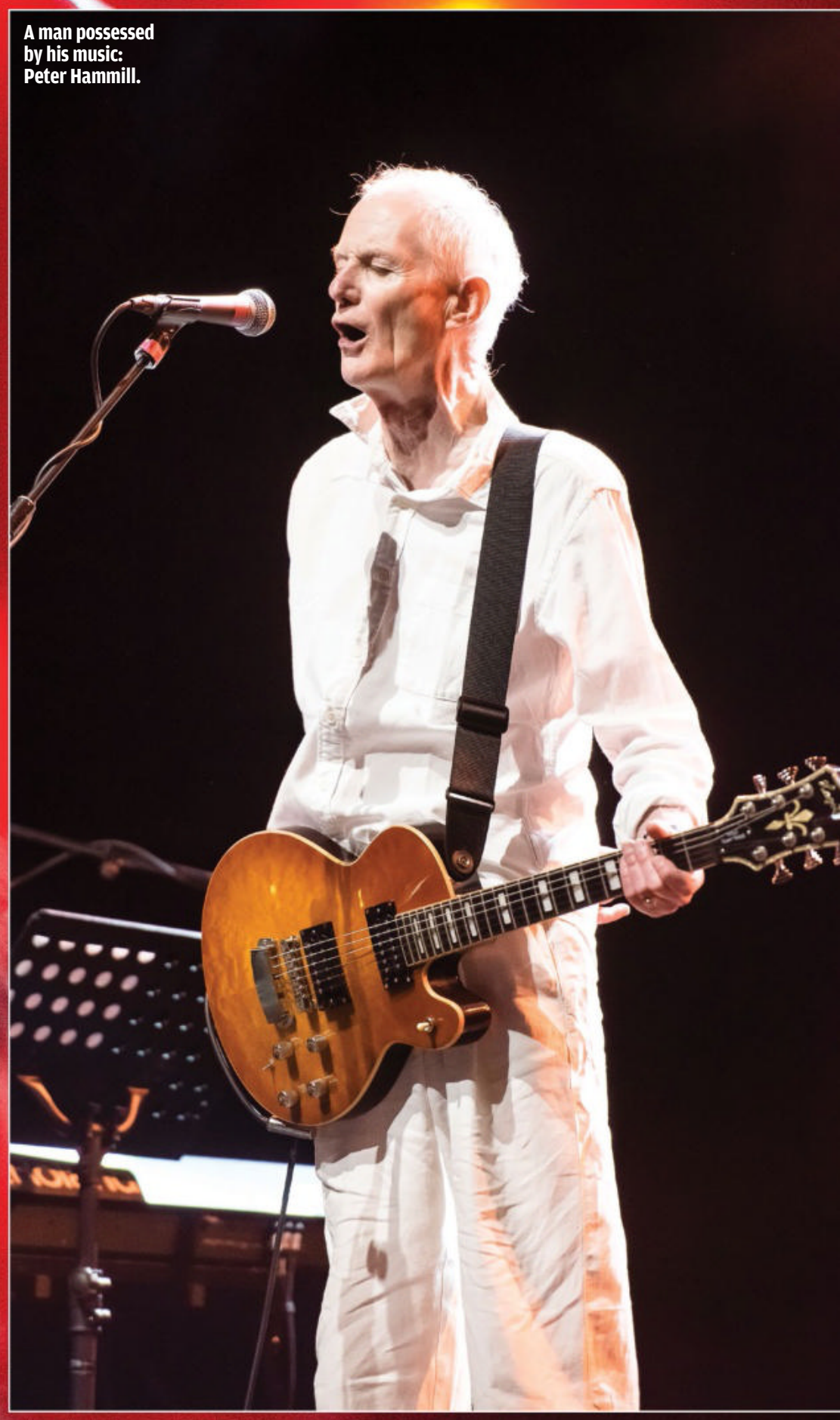
> **"The applause after every song, which includes a number of standing ovations, is rather like that which might accompany a lifetime achievement award."**

The trio combine chemistry, excitement and intensity for tonight's brilliant show.



Standing ovations all round for Van der Graaf Generator.

WILL IRELAND



A man possessed by his music: Peter Hammill.

The resilient Peter Hammill and Guy Evans.

Hugh Banton: one of prog's most underrated keyboard players.

Take a Bow

NORDIC GIANTS

VENUE	THE GARAGE, LONDON
DATE	25/02/2022

As society was forced in and out of lockdown, we were bombarded with the thought of what the "new normal" would be. It's still not something we can confidently answer. However, the fact that Nordic Giants – post-rock's most reliably awe-inspiring live band – are back on the road lends a soothing consistency to this otherwise unpredictable era.

Every show follows the same structure: two masked musicians – keyboardist Loki and drummer Rôka – playing blissful instrumentals with short films projected live. It's a spectacle that's made them darlings of the avant-garde music world. Such is the loyalty of their following, they even crowdfunded their new album, *Symbiosis*.

At a criminally not-sold-out Garage, the pair seize the stage in shadow. The warhorn from *Planet Of The Apes* marks their arrival, flaunting their blockbuster scope. Behind them, dioramas of ravens consume the hanging screen. *Symbiosis* opener *Philosophy Of Mind* ensues, its twirling keys and pounding percussion accompanied by animations of characters oppressed by modern technology.

From there, commentary on contemporary society becomes the theme, despite Nordic Giants' largely lyric-less tunes. *Convergence* depicts a literal rat race: a hand-drawn rodent on a commute obsessed with products that promise happiness but ultimately leave him as hollow as before. *Dark Clouds Mean War*, meanwhile, shows businessmen resuming their daily lives as the world ends; not even meteorites falling from the sky can halt capitalism. The short was filmed pre-Covid, yet the pandemic has made it more powerful than ever.

There's space for levity in Nordic Giants' cinematic universe, though. For example, *Illuminate* is backed by slapstick, with two undertakers trying to get a coffin to its grave undamaged. Similarly against the grain is *Faceless*. The piano ballad is thrust into the heavens by a rare but dramatic vocal performance, courtesy of Alex Hedley.

Although selections from *Symbiosis* dominate, classics do permeate the setlist. *Through A Lens Darkly* has long been a mainstay, but repeat listens don't make it any easier to experience. Its video imagines an airless world devoid of atmosphere, forcing a family to brutally kill one another over oxygen tanks. More uplifting is *Together*, which places an invigorating classical melody beneath Martin Luther King Jr's "Fierce Urgency Of Now" speech.

In a world where everything could fall through at a moment's notice, Nordic Giants are unfailing. Whether it's your first, second or even fifth time seeing them, you're in for a cinematic and all-consuming escape, unifying the strengths of both experimental music and short-form filmmaking.

MATT MILLS

TANGERINE DREAM

VENUE	THE ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON
DATE	18/03/2022

It seems bizarre that Tangerine Dream should have beaten Kraftwerk to their philosophical punch for here is a band performing synthesiser-driven music with absolutely none of the original members gracing the current line-up. Not that their late founder, Edgar Froese, would have approved of the comparison to Düsseldorf's most famous exponents of electronic music. "We are people making music, not machines," he once said. "We are writing songs and compositions and then translate them with synthesisers." But the question does linger: can the current line-up of Tangerine Dream – that'll be Thorsten Quaeschning (synths/bandleader), Hoshiko Yamane (violin/synths) and Paul Frick (synths) – live up to the spirit of the original incarnation?

"Can the current line-up of Tangerine Dream live up to the spirit of the original incarnation? The answer is 'yes'."

On the evidence of Tangerine Dream's current release, *Raum*, the answer is "yes", thanks to the ideas that Froese left behind on his hard drive before his passing. And live? Again, the answer is in the affirmative, although it's not always for the right reasons.

One of the biggest problems that electronic music still faces is that of presentation. After all, just how interesting are musicians hunched over their keyboards, not least as they may well be sending emails on the laptops positioned next to them? With this in mind, Tangerine Dream's transformation of the stage into something akin to a hypnotically shimmering spacecraft making first contact is most impressive and in keeping with the Roundhouse's 60s resurgence as a psychedelic music venue. With lasers strafing the incredible metalwork of the venue's ceiling and lights beaming into the audience, their performance shortcomings are soon kicked into touch.

What's also apparent is that the material that fares best is that which was created when Tangerine Dream's ideas were still ahead of the then-available technology rather than the music that followed in the advances of what was available to them. *Choronzon* feels horribly dated as it serves to remind of a time of all surface and no feeling. Likewise the ponderous *Tangram (Set I)* that overstays its welcome.

But those blips are easy to overlook. With *Raum* wisely peering beyond the soundtracks that came to dominate their 80s output to the template of pioneering albums of the 70s, the outings of the title track and *You're Always On Time* prove to be worthy additions to their canon. *Love On A Real Train* (from *Risky Business*) is as dependable as ever while *It Is Time To Leave When Everyone Is Dancing* proves to be utterly seductive. Elsewhere, Marillion's Steve Rothery makes his presence felt as he guests on *Kiew Mission* and beyond with a remarkable display of snaking guitar. Edgar Froese would be proud.

JULIAN MARSZALEK

Three's a dream...

KEVIN NIXON

THE PINEAPPLE THIEF

VENUE	ROCKEFELLER, OSLO, NORWAY
DATE	22/03/2022

When the pandemic first struck, The Pineapple Thief were one of the only bands who postponed their 2020 Oslo gig by a whole two years. It might have seemed like a ridiculous length of time to some, but the live experience has certainly been worth waiting for. Frontman Bruce Soord addresses the crowd with gratitude: "Hands up if this is your first gig for a long time – it's a special time, isn't it? Thank you so much for coming."

Back in 2009, when the British band first played in Oslo, the audience consisted of around 25 people. Now, there are several hundred in attendance. It helps that they have King Crimson and Porcupine Tree drum master Gavin Harrison in the band, and the setlist heavily focuses on albums released since he joined, from 2016's *Your Wilderness* and 2018's *Dissolution* through to 2020's *Versions Of The Truth*. The title track of the latter opens tonight's show as ambient noise fills the room, before bandleader Soord makes hand gestures and sings the lyrics '*You caught me in the black light*'. It's followed by an early highlight, the understated *In Exile*, which showcases the complex rhythms Harrison brings to the band's music.

As the night progresses, the band flit between being animated on stage, then soothingly static. It's also a reflection of how they like to build a song, fluctuating between delicate acoustics to powerful bursts of guitar, bass and drums, where not only Harrison, but also bassist Jon Sykes and second guitarist Beren Matthews can shine. A mid-set highlight is *Give It Back*, with its heavy intro later breaking down to just Soord's voice filling the room, but then layers and textures build, including tribal drumming from Harrison. The crowd claps in unison along with Soord repeatedly chanting, '*I will give it back to you*'. After the calming effect of the softer *Fend For Yourself*, it's time to raise the roof with *White Mist*. The brief drum solo sparks sporadic yells of enthusiasm from the audience, and leads into a powerful guitar solo. Soord joins the party with some guitar sliding and keys are added too, all building to a climax of thunderous drums and squealing guitars, followed by the loudest cheers and chants of the night so far.

The encore begins with older track, *Part Zero*, from 2003's *Variations On A Dream*. It's followed by the spatial *The Final Thing On My Mind* with Soord's echoing vocals and Matthews' slick whammy bar. The dynamic *Nothing At Best*, from 2010's *Someone Here Is Missing*, ends the concert and Steve Kitch emerges from behind his keyboard and plays keytar up front, jumping around with the rest of the band. After a two-year wait, the crowd are jumping wildly too!

ANNE-MARIE FORKER

SUBSCRIBE TO

PROG

AND GET A PAIR OF **FREE**

FLARES JET 2 EARPHONES

★ **ADVANCED JET SOUND-BALANCING TECHNOLOGY**

★ **PRECISION TURNED FROM AEROSPACE-GRADE ALUMINIUM**

★ **LIGHTWEIGHT & COMFORTABLE FIT – DRIVER DIAMETER 10MM**

★ **MICROPHONE & CONTROLLER CAPABILITIES**

WORTH £39.99! RRP

CHOOSE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

PRINT + DIGITAL: £38.50 every 6 months, saving **35%***

or

PRINT ONLY: £26.00 every 6 months, saving **34%***

SAVE 35%
ON A 6-MONTHLY PRINT & DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION

BENEFITS OF SUBSCRIBING

NEVER MISS AN ISSUE

CONVENIENT HOME DELIVERY

FREE JET 2 EARPHONES

PAY LESS THAN YOU WOULD IN THE SHOPS

TO ORDER ONLINE VISIT...

www.magazinesdirect.com/A42B

or call **0330 333 1113** and quote **A42B**

***Terms and conditions:** Offer closes July 1, 2022. Offer open to new subscribers only. Direct Debit offer is available to UK subscribers only. Advertised rates payable by six-monthly Direct Debit. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue (up to eight weeks overseas). The full subscription rate is for 12 months (10 issues) and includes postage and packaging. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. *Your gift will be delivered separately within 60 days after your first payment has cleared. Gifts only available to subscribers on the UK mainland. In the unlikely event that we run out of this gift, we promise to offer you an alternative gift of the same or greater value. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries and overseas rates please call: +44 (0) 330 333 1113. Lines are open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm UK Time, or email: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.

ANDERS BUAAS

ANDERS BUAAS

The great and good of progressive music give us a glimpse into their prog worlds. **As told to Grant Moon**

Where's home?
Usually my studio in Larvik, Norway, but preferably a pub in Edinburgh — my favourite place to travel.

What's your earliest prog memory?
When I was nine a teacher introduced me to Led Zeppelin, later I got into The Beatles and Iron Maiden — I went on to play guitar for Paul Di'Anno [Maiden's original vocalist]. I know those bands aren't 'pure prog', but they were all pretty proggy.

What's the first prog album you bought?
Fragile by Yes, in the early 90s when I really got into prog and jazz fusion.

And the last?
Caligonaut's *Magnified As Giants*, on vinyl. They're a Norwegian band, this is their debut and I'm a huge fan of theirs.

First prog gig?
Jethro Tull at Sentrum Scene in Oslo on May 2, 1994. They blew my mind and I've been a Tull fan ever since.

And the latest?
The Aristocrats in Oslo, November 2019. I'm the head of Larvik Guitar Festival and they've played there too.

Newest prog discovery?
So many — Caligonaut, Wobbler, Nick Johnston — but Fairport Convention's *Liege & Lief* [1969] has grown so much on me lately. It's amazing.

What's the best prog gig you ever saw?
Yes, at 2003's Sweden Rock Festival. Rick Wakeman was in the line-up, and Steve Howe played *The Clap* — a dream come true for me.

Any guilty musical pleasures?
I'm a huge fan of Manic Street Preachers. They're pretty proggy at times — a great band with really solid, memorable songs.

Specialist subject on *Mastermind*?
Definitely Scottish single malts!

Glenfarclas 21 is my current favourite...

Your favourite prog venue?
Bølgen Kulturhus in Larvik — where we hold the guitar festival — or Sentrum Scene, Oslo.

Who's your prog hero?
Mike Oldfield never sounds like anyone else, and I admire him as a modern composer. And also Al Di Meola is a huge influence on me, especially the 70s stuff.

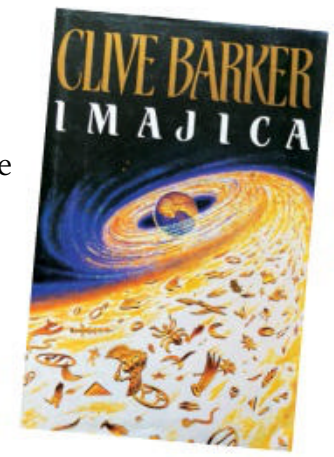
Outside of music, what are you into?
I love fantasy and horror fiction, and I'm a huge *Star Wars* fan too.

Who do you call in the prog community for a good night out?
Henrik [Kaupang, aka Rick Hagan] from Hex A.D. He's a good friend of mine, plays drums for Paul Di'Anno.

What's the most important piece of prog rock music?
For me it's *Close To The Edge*. But, honestly, if you had to explain prog to somebody from scratch, *Bohemian Rhapsody* is the essence of prog.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE/UIG VIA GETTY IMAGES

Recommend us a good read.
My favourite author is Clive Barker, and for me his best book is *Imajica* [1997]. Now that's a must-read for all progheads!



Which prog muso would you most like to work with?
Peter Gabriel's one of my favourite artists and a I'm a huge fan of [his] production work — I'd love to see his brain in action.

Which proggy album gets you in a happy mood?
Tull's *Songs From The Wood*.

Your favourite prog album cover?
There are so many great ones. Yes's *Relayer*, maybe?

And what are you up to at the moment?
My album *Tarot* is out [on Apollon], and I've just finished mixing my new album, *The Edinburgh Suite*, featuring Marco Minnemann on drums and Tony Franklin on bass. It's taken me two years to produce, I'm so proud of it.

See www.andersbuaas.bandcamp.com for more information.

SHIRLAINE FORREST/GETTY IMAGES

Manic Street Preachers: "a great band."

> My first prog gig was Jethro Tull. They blew my mind and I've been a fan ever since.

Advertisement

Could you save on your household bills?

If you're looking for an easy way to save money on your household bills, what better way than to compare prices and policies with GoCompare.

From car insurance and home insurance, to travel insurance and broadband, you can compare quotes for over 40 products. Now that's something to sing and dance about.

GoCompare

PROG and GoCompare.com are both Future Plc brands

COHEED AND CAMBRIA
VAXIS II
A WINDOW OF THE WAKING MIND
THE STUNNING NEW ALBUM
OUT 27 MAY
FEATURING THE SINGLES 'SHOULDERS' & 'THE LIARS CLUB'
CD • DIGITAL • LTD EDITION 2LP • LTD EDITION DELUXE BOX SET
AVAILABLE AS MARMALADE GLOW ORANGE VINYL, TRANSPARENT ELECTRIC BLUE VINYL AND SEA BLUE VINYL
PRE-ORDER NOW
9001
9000
ROADRUNNERRECORDS.CO.UK
ROADRUNNER
COHEEDANDCAMBRIA.COM